

## OF THE STREET-FINDERS OR COLLECTORS.

THESE men, for by far the great majority are men, may be divided, according to the nature of their occupations, into three classes:—

1. The bone-grubbers and rag-gatherers, who are, indeed, the same individuals, the pure-finders, and the cigar-end and old wood collectors.

2. The dredgermen, the mud-larks, and the sewer-hunters.

3. The dustmen and nightmen, the sweeps and the scavengers.

The first class go abroad daily to find in the streets, and carry away with them such things as bones, rags, "pure" (or dogs'-dung), which no one appropriates. These they sell, and on that sale support a wretched life. The second class of people are also as strictly finders; but their industry, or rather their labour, is confined to the river, or to that subterranean city of sewerage unto which the Thames supplies the great outlets. These persons may not be immediately connected with the streets of London, but their pursuits are carried on in the open air (if the sewer-air may be so included), and are all, at any rate, out-of-door avocations. The third class is distinct from either of these, as the labourers comprised in it are not finders, but collectors or removers of the dirt and filth of our streets and houses, and of the soot of our chimneys.

The two first classes also differ from the third in the fact that the sweeps, dustmen, scavengers, &c., are paid (and often large sums) for the removal of the refuse they collect; whereas the bone-grubbers, and mud-larks, and pure-finders, and dredgermen, and sewer-hunters, get for their pains only the value of the articles they gather.

Herein, too, lies a broad distinction between the street-finder, or collector, and the street-buyer: though both deal principally with refuse, the buyer pays for what he is permitted to take away; whereas the finder or collector is either paid (like the sweep), or else he neither pays nor is paid (like the bone-grubber), for the refuse that he removes.

The third class of street-collectors also presents another and a markedly distinctive characteristic. They act in the capacity of servants, and do not depend upon chance for the result of their day's labour, but are put to stated tasks, being employed and paid a fixed sum for their work. To this description, however, some of the sweeps present an exception; as when the sweep works on his own account, or, as it is worded, "is his own master."

The public health requires the periodical cleaning of the streets, and the removal of the refuse matter from our dwellings; and the man who contracts to carry on this work is decidedly a street-collector; for on what he collects or removes depends the amount of his remuneration. Thus a wealthy contractor for the public scavengery, is as entirely one of the street-folk as the unskilled and ignorant labourer he employs. The master lives,

and, in many instances, has become rich, on the results of his street employment; for, of course, the actual workmen are but as the agents or sources of his profit. Even the collection of "pure" (dogs'-dung) in the streets, if conducted by the servants of any tanner or leather dresser, either for the purposes of his own trade or for sale to others, might be the occupation of a wealthy man, deriving a small profit from the labour of each particular collector. The same may also be said of bone-grubbing, or any similar occupation, however insignificant, and now abandoned to the outcast.

Were the collection of mud and dust carried on by a number of distinct individuals—that is to say, were each individual dustman and scavenger to collect on his own account, there is no doubt that no one man could amass a fortune by such means—while if the collection of bones and rags and even dogs'-dung were carried on "in the large way," that is to say, by a number of individual collectors working for one "head man," even the picking up of the most abject refuse of the metropolis might become the source of great riches.

The bone-grubber and the mud-lark (the searcher for refuse on the banks of the river) differ little in their pursuits or in their characteristics, excepting that the mud-larks are generally boys, which is more an accidental than a definite distinction. The grubbers are with a few exceptions stupid, unconscious of their degradation, and with little anxiety to be relieved from it. They are usually taciturn, but this taciturn habit is common to men whose callings, if they cannot be called solitary, are pursued with little communication with others. I was informed by a man who once kept a little beer-shop near Friar-street, Southwark Bridge-road (where then and still, he thought, was a bone-grinding establishment), that the bone-grubbers who carried their sacks of bones thither sometimes had a pint of beer at his house when they had received their money. They usually sat, he told me, silently looking at the corners of the floor—for they rarely lifted their eyes up—as if they were expecting to see some bones or refuse there available for their bags. Of this inertion, perhaps fatigue and despair may be a part. I asked some questions of a man of this class whom I saw pick up in a road in the suburbs something that appeared to have been a coarse canvas apron, although it was wet after a night's rain and half covered with mud. I inquired of him what he thought about when he trudged along looking on the ground on every side. His answer was, "Of nothing, sir." I believe that no better description could be given of that vacuity of mind or mental inactivity which seems to form a part of the most degraded callings. The minds of such men, even without an approach to idiocy, appear to be a blank. One characteristic of these poor fellows, bone-grubbers and mud-larks, is that they

are very poor, although I am told some of them, the older men, have among the poor the reputation of being misers. It is not unusual for the youths belonging to these callings to live with their parents and give them the amount of their earnings.

The sewer-hunters are again distinct, and a far more intelligent and adventurous class; but they work in gangs. They must be familiar with the course of the tides, or they might be drowned at high water. They must have quick eyes too, not merely to descry the objects of their search, but to mark the points and bearings of the subterranean roads they traverse; in a word, "to know their way underground." There is, moreover, some spirit of daring in venturing into a dark, solitary sewer, the chart being only in the memory, and in braving the possibility of noxious vapours, and the by no means insignificant dangers of the rats infesting these places.

The dredgermen, the finders of the water, are again distinct, as being watermen, and working in boats. In some foreign parts, in Naples, for instance, men carrying on similar pursuits are also divers for anything lost in the bay or its confluent waters. One of these men, known some years ago as "the Fish," could remain (at least, so say those whom there is no reason to doubt) three hours under the water without rising to the surface to take breath. He was, it is said, web-footed, naturally, and partially web-fingered. The King of the Two Sicilies once threw a silver cup into the sea for "the Fish" to bring up and retain as a reward, but the poor diver was never seen again. It was believed that he got entangled among the weeds on the rocks, and so perished. The dredgermen are necessarily well acquainted with the sets of the tide and the course of the currents in the Thames. Every one of these men works on his own account, being as it were a "small master," which, indeed, is one of the great attractions of open-air pursuits. The dredgermen also depend for their maintenance upon the sale of what they find, or the rewards they receive.

It is otherwise, however, as was before observed, with the third class of the street-finders, or rather collectors. In all the capacities of dustmen, nightmen, scavengers, and sweeps, the employers of the men are paid to do the work, the proceeds of the street-collection forming only a portion of the employer's remuneration. The sweep has the soot in addition to his 6d. or 1s.; the master scavenger has a payment from the parish funds to sweep the streets, though the clearance of the cesspools, &c., in private houses, may be an individual bargain. The whole refuse of the streets belongs to the contractor to make the best of, but it must be cleared away, and so must the contents of a dust-bin; for if a mass of dirt become offensive, the householder may be indicted for a nuisance, and municipal by-laws require its removal. It is thus made a matter of compulsion that the dust be removed from a private house; but it is otherwise with the soot. Why a man should be permitted to let soot accumulate in his

chimney—perhaps exposing himself, his family, his lodgers, and his neighbours to the dangers of fire, it may not be easy to account for, especially when we bear in mind that the same man may not accumulate cabbage-leaves and fish-tails in his yard.

The dustmen are of the plodding class of labourers, mere labourers, who require only bodily power, and possess little or no mental development. Many of the agricultural labourers are of this order, and the dustman often seems to be the stolid ploughman, modified by a residence in a city, and engaged in a peculiar calling. They are generally uninformed, and no few of them are dustmen because their fathers were. The same may be said of nightmen and scavengers. At one time it was a popular, or rather a vulgar notion that many dustmen had become possessed of large sums, from the plate, coins, and valuables they found in clearing the dust-bins—a manifest absurdity; but I was told by a marine-store dealer that he had known a young woman, a dustman's daughter, sell silver spoons to a neighbouring marine-store man, who was "not very particular."

The circumstances and character of the chimney-sweeps have, since Parliament "put down" the climbing boys, undergone considerable change. The sufferings of many of the climbing boys were very great. They were often ill-lodged, ill-fed, barely-clad, forced to ascend hot and narrow flues, and subject to diseases—such as the chimney-sweep's cancer—peculiar to their calling. The child hated his trade, and was easily tempted to be a thief, for prison was an asylum; or he grew up a morose tyrannical fellow as journeyman or master. Some of the young sweeps became very bold thieves and house-breakers, and the most remarkable, as far as personal daring is concerned: the boldest feat of escape from Newgate was performed by a youth who had been brought up a chimney-sweep. He climbed up the two bare rugged walls of a corner of the interior of the prison, in the open air, to the height of some 60 feet. He had only the use of his hands, knees, and feet, and a single slip, from fear or pain, would have been death; he surmounted a parapet after this climbing, and gained the roof, but was recaptured before he could get clear away. He was, moreover, a sickly, and reputed a cowardly, young man, and ended his career in this country by being transported.

A master sweep, now in middle age, and a man "well to do," told me that when a mere child he had been apprenticed out of the workhouse to a sweep, such being at that time a common occurrence. He had undergone, he said, great hardships while learning his business, and was long, from the indifferently character of his class, ashamed of being a sweep, both as journeyman and master; but the sweeps were so much improved in character now, that he no longer felt himself disgraced in his calling.

The sweeps are more intelligent than the mere ordinary labourers I have written of under this head, but they are, of course, far from being an educated body.

The further and more minute characteristics of the curious class of street-finders or collectors will be found in the particular details and statements.

Among the finders there is perhaps the greatest poverty existing, they being the very lowest class of all the street-people. Many of the very old live on the hard dirty crusts they pick up out of the roads in the course of their rounds, washing them and steeping them in water before they eat them. Probably that vacuity of mind which is a distinguishing feature of the class is the mere atony or emaciation of the mental faculties proceeding from—though often producing in the want of energy that it necessarily begets—the extreme wretchedness of the class. But even their liberty and a crust—as it frequently literally is—appears preferable to these people to the restrictions of the workhouse. Those who are unable to comprehend the inertia of both body and mind begotten by the despair of long-continued misfortune are referred to page 357 of the first volume of this work, where it will be found that a tinman, in speaking of the misery connected with the early part of his street-career, describes the effect of extreme want as producing not only an absence of all hope, but even of a desire to better the condition. Those, however, who have studied the mysterious connection between body and mind, and observed what different creatures they themselves are before and after dinner, can well understand that a long-continued deficiency of food must have the same weakening effect on the muscles of the mind and energy of the thoughts and will, as it has on the limbs themselves.

Occasionally it will be found that the utter abjectness of the bone-grubbers has arisen from the want of energy begotten by intemperate habits. The workman has nothing but this same energy to live upon, and the permanent effect of stimulating liquors is to produce an amount of depression corresponding to the excitement momentarily caused by them in the frame. The operative, therefore, who spends his earnings on "drink," not only squanders them on a brutalising luxury, but deprives himself of the power, and consequently of the disposition, to work for more, and hence that idleness, carelessness, and neglect which are the distinctive qualities of the drunkard, and sooner or later compass his ruin.

For the poor wretched children who are reared to this the lowest trade of all, surely even the most insensible and unimaginative must feel the acutest pity. There is, however, this consolation: I have heard of none, with the exception of the more prosperous sewer-hunters and dredgers, who have remained all their lives at street-finding. Still there remains much to be done by all those who are impressed with a sense of the trust that has been confided to them, in the possession of those endowments which render their lot in this world so much more easy than that of the less lucky street-finders.

#### BONE-GRUBBERS AND RAG-GATHERERS.

THE habits of the bone-grubbers and rag-gatherers, the "pure," or dogs'-dung collectors, and the

cigar-end finders, are necessarily similar. All lead a wandering, unsettled sort of life, being compelled to be continually on foot, and to travel many miles every day in search of the articles in which they deal. They seldom have any fixed place of abode, and are mostly to be found at night in one or other of the low lodging-houses throughout London. The majority are, moreover, persons who have been brought up to other employments, but who from some failing or mishap have been reduced to such a state of distress that they were obliged to take to their present occupation, and have never after been able to get away from it.

Of the whole class it is considered that there are from 800 to 1000 resident in London, one-half of whom, at the least, sleep in the cheap lodging-houses. The Government returns estimate the number of mendicants' lodging-houses in London to be upwards of 200. Allowing two bone-grubbers and pure-finders to frequent each of these lodging-houses, there will be upwards of 400 availing themselves of such nightly shelters. As many more, I am told, live in garrets and ill-furnished rooms in the lowest neighbourhoods. There is no instance on record of any of the class renting even the smallest house for himself.

Moreover there are in London during the winter a number of persons called "trampers," who employ themselves at that season in street-finding. These people are in the summer country labourers of some sort, but as soon as the harvest and potato-getting and hop-picking are over, and they can find nothing else to do in the country, they come back to London to avail themselves of the shelter of the night asylums or refuges for the destitute (usually called "straw-yards" by the poor), for if they remained in the provinces at that period of the year they would be forced to have recourse to the unions, and as they can only stay one night in each place they would be obliged to travel from ten to fifteen miles per day, to which in the winter they have a strong objection. They come up to London in the winter, not to look for any regular work or employment, but because they know that they can have a nightly shelter, and bread night and morning for nothing, during that season, and can during the day collect bones, rags, &c. As soon as the "straw-yards" close, which is generally about the beginning of April, the "trampers" again start off to the country in small bands of two or three, and without any fixed residence keep wandering about all the summer, sometimes begging their way through the villages and sleeping in the casual wards of the unions, and sometimes, when hard driven, working at hay-making or any other light labour.

Those among the bone-grubbers who do not belong to the regular "trampers" have been either navvies, or men who have not been able to obtain employment at their own business, and have been driven to it by necessity as a means of obtaining a little bread for the time being, and without any intention of pursuing the calling regularly; but, as I have said, when once in the

business they cannot leave it, for at least they make certain of getting a few halfpence by it, and their present necessity does not allow them time to look after other employment. There are many of the street-finders who are old men and women, and many very young children who have no other means of living. Since the famine in Ireland vast numbers of that unfortunate people, particularly boys and girls, have been engaged in gathering bones and rags in the streets.

The bone-picker and rag-gatherer may be known at once by the greasy bag which he carries on his back. Usually he has a stick in his hand, and this is armed with a spike or hook, for the purpose of more easily turning over the heaps of ashes or dirt that are thrown out of the houses, and discovering whether they contain anything that is saleable at the rag-and-bottle or marine-store shop. The bone-grubber generally seeks out the narrow back streets, where dust and refuse are cast, or where any dust-bins are accessible. The articles for which he chiefly searches are rags and bones—rags he prefers—but waste metal, such as bits of lead, pewter, copper, brass, or old iron, he prizes above all. Whatever he meets with that he knows to be in any way saleable he puts into the bag at his back. He often finds large lumps of bread which have been thrown out as waste by the servants, and occasionally the house-keepers will give him some bones on which there is a little meat remaining; these constitute the morning meal of most of the class. One of my informants had a large rump of beef bone given to him a few days previous to my seeing him, on which "there was not less than a pound of meat."

The bone-pickers and rag-gatherers are all early risers. They have all their separate beats or districts, and it is most important to them that they should reach their district before any one else of the same class can go over the ground. Some of the beats lie as far as Peckham, Clapham, Hammersmith, Hampstead, Bow, Stratford, and indeed all parts within about five miles of London. In summer time they rise at two in the morning, and sometimes earlier. It is not quite light at this hour—but bones and rags can be discovered before daybreak. The "grubbers" scour all quarters of London, but abound more particularly in the suburbs. In the neighbourhood of Petticoat-lane and Ragfair, however, they are the most numerous on account of the greater quantity of rags which the Jews have to throw out. It usually takes the bone-picker from seven to nine hours to go over his rounds, during which time he travels from 20 to 30 miles with a quarter to a half hundredweight on his back. In the summer he usually reaches home about eleven of the day, and in the winter about one or two. On his return home he proceeds to sort the contents of his bag. He separates the rags from the bones, and these again from the old metal (if he be lucky enough to have found any). He divides the rags into various lots, according as they are white or coloured; and if he has picked up any pieces of canvas or sacking, he makes these also

into a separate parcel. When he has finished the sorting he takes his several lots to the rag-shop or the marine-store dealer, and realizes upon them whatever they may be worth. For the white rags he gets from 2d. to 3d. per pound, according as they are clean or soiled. The white rags are very difficult to be found; they are mostly very dirty, and are therefore sold with the coloured ones at the rate of about 5 lbs. for 2d. The bones are usually sold with the coloured rags at one and the same price. For fragments of canvas or sacking the grubber gets about three-farthings a pound; and old brass, copper, and pewter about 4d. (the marine-store keepers say 5d.), and old iron one farthing per pound, or six pounds for 1d. The bone-grubber thinks he has done an excellent day's work if he can earn 8d.; and some of them, especially the very old and the very young, do not earn more than from 2d. to 3d. a day. To make 10d. a day, at the present price of rags and bones, a man must be remarkably active and strong—"ay! and lucky, too," adds my informant. The average amount of earnings, I am told, varies from about 6d. to 8d. per day, or from 3s. to 4s. a week; and the highest amount that a man, the most brisk and persevering at the business, can by any possibility earn in one week is about 5s., but this can only be accomplished by great good fortune and industry—the usual weekly gains are about half that sum. In bad weather the bone-grubber cannot do so well, because the rags are wet, and then they cannot sell them. The majority pick up bones only in wet weather; those who *do* gather rags during or after rain are obliged to wash and dry them before they can sell them. The state of the shoes of the rag and bone-picker is a very important matter to him; for if he be well shod he can get quickly over the ground; but he is frequently lamed, and unable to make any progress from the blisters and gashes on his feet, occasioned by the want of proper shoes.

Sometimes the bone-grubbers will pick up a stray sixpence or a shilling that has been dropped in the street. "The handkerchief I have round my neck," said one whom I saw, "I picked up with 1s. in the corner. The greatest prize I ever found was the brass cap of the nave of a coach-wheel; and I *did* once find a quarter of a pound of tobacco in Sun-street, Bishopsgate. The best bit of luck of all that I ever had was finding a cheque for 12l. 15s. lying in the gateway of the mourning-coach yard in Titchborne-street, Haymarket. I was going to light my pipe with it, indeed I picked it up for that purpose, and then saw it was a cheque. It was on the London and County Bank, 21, Lombard-street. I took it there, and got 10s. for finding it. I went there in my rags, as I am now, and the cashier stared a bit at me. The cheque was drawn by a Mr. Knibb, and payable to a Mr. Cox. I *did* think I should have got the odd 15s. though."

It has been stated that the average amount of the earnings of the bone-pickers is 6d. per day, or 3s. per week, being 7l. 16s. per annum for each person. It has also been shown that the number

of persons engaged in the business may be estimated at about 800; hence the earnings of the entire number will amount to the sum of 20*l.* per day, or 120*l.* per week, which gives 6240*l.* as the annual earnings of the bone-pickers and rag-gatherers of London. It may also be computed that each of the grubbers gathers on an average 20 lbs. weight of bone and rags; and reckoning the bones to constitute three-fourths of the entire weight, we thus find that the gross quantity of these articles gathered by the street-finders in the course of the year, amounts to 3,744,000 lbs. of bones, and 1,240,000 lbs. of rags.

Between the London and St. Katherine's Docks and Rosemary Lane, there is a large district interlaced with narrow lanes, courts, and alleys ramifying into each other in the most intricate and disorderly manner, insomuch that it would be no easy matter for a stranger to work his way through the interminable confusion without the aid of a guide, resident in and well conversant with the locality. The houses are of the poorest description, and seem as if they tumbled into their places at random. Foul channels, huge dust-heaps, and a variety of other unsightly objects, occupy every open space, and dabbling among these are crowds of ragged dirty children who grub and wallow, as if in their native element. None reside in these places but the poorest and most wretched of the population, and, as might almost be expected, this, the cheapest and filthiest locality of London, is the head-quarters of the bone-grubbers and other street-finders. I have ascertained on the best authority, that from the centre of this place, within a circle of a mile in diameter, there dwell not less than 200 persons of this class. In this quarter I found a bone-grubber who gave me the following account of himself:—

"I was born in Liverpool, and when about 14 years of age, my father died. He used to work about the Docks, and I used to run on errands for any person who wanted me. I managed to live by this after my father's death for three or four years. I had a brother older than myself, who went to France to work on the railroads, and when I was about 18 he sent for me, and got me to work with himself on the Paris and Rouen Railway, under McKenzie and Brassy, who had the contract. I worked on the railroads in France for four years, till the disturbance broke out, and then we all got notice to leave the country. I lodged at that time with a countryman, and had 12*l.*, which I had saved out of my earnings. This sum I gave to my countryman to keep for me till we got to London, as I did not like to have it about me, for fear I'd lose it. The French people paid our fare from Rouen to Havre by the railway, and there put us on board a steamer to Southampton. There was about 50 of us altogether. When we got to Southampton, we all went before the mayor; we told him about how we had been driven out of France, and he gave us a shilling a piece; he sent some one with us, too, to get us a lodging, and told us to come again the next day. In the morning the mayor gave every one who was able to walk half-a-crown, and for those who

were not able he paid their fare to London on the railroad. I had a sore leg at the time, and I came up by the train, and when I gave up my ticket at the station, the gentleman gave me a shilling more. I couldn't find the man I had given my money to, because he had walked up; and I went before the Lord Mayor to ask his advice; he gave me 2*s.* 6*d.* I looked for work everywhere, but could get nothing to do; and when the 2*s.* 6*d.* was all spent, I heard that the man who had my money was on the London and York Railway in the country; however, I couldn't get that far for want of money then; so I went again before the Lord Mayor, and he gave me two more, but told me not to trouble him any further. I told the Lord Mayor about the money, and then he sent an officer with me, who put me into a carriage on the railway. When I got down to where the man was at work, he wouldn't give me a farthing; I had given him the money without any witness bring present, and he said I could do nothing, because it was done in another country. I staid down there more than a week trying to get work on the railroad, but could not. I had no money and was nearly starved, when two or three took pity on me, and made up four or five shillings for me, to take me back again to London. I tried all I could to get something to do, till the money was nearly gone; and then I took to selling lucifers, and the fly-papers that they use in the shops, and little things like that; but I could do no good at this work, there was too many at it before me, and they knew more about it than I did. At last, I got so bad off I didn't know what to do; but seeing a great many about here gathering bones and rags, I thought I'd do so too—a poor fellow must do something. I was advised to do so, and I have been at it ever since. I forgot to tell you that my brother died in France. We had good wages there, four francs a day, or 3*s.* 4*d.* English; I don't make more than 3*d.* or 4*d.* and sometimes 6*d.* a day at bone-picking. I don't go out before daylight to gather anything, because the police takes my bag and throws all I've gathered about the street to see if I have anything stolen in it. I never stole anything in all my life, indeed I'd do anything before I'd steal. Many a night I've slept under an arch of the railway when I hadn't a penny to pay for my bed; but whenever the police find me that way, they make me and the rest get up, and drive us on, and tell us to keep moving. I don't go out on wet days, there's no use in it, as the things won't be bought. I can't wash and dry them, because I'm in a lodging-house. There's a great deal more than a 100 bone-pickers about here, men, women, and children. The Jews in this lane and up in Petticoat-lane give a good deal of victuals away on the Saturday. They sometimes call one of us in from the street to light the fire for them, or take off the kettle, as they must not do anything themselves on the Sabbath; and then they put some food on the footpath, and throw rags and bones into the street for us, because they must not hand anything to us. There are some about here who get a couple of shillings' worth of goods, and go on

board the ships in the Docks, and exchange them for bones and bits of old canvas among the sailors; I'd buy and do so too if I only had the money, but can't get it. The summer is the worst time for us, the winter is much better, for there is more meat used in winter, and then there are more bones." (Others say differently.) "I intend to go to the country this season, and try to get something to do at the hay-making and harvest. I make about 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, and the way I manage is this: sometimes I get a piece of bread about 12 o'clock, and I make my breakfast of that and cold water; very seldom I have any dinner,—unless I earn 6*d.* I can't get any,—and then I have a basin of nice soup, or a penn'orth of plum-pudding and a couple of baked 'tatoes. At night I get ¼*d.* worth of coffee, ¼*d.* worth of sugar, and 1¼*d.* worth of bread, and then I have 2*d.* a night left for my lodging; I always try to manage that, for I'd do anything sooner than stop out all night. I'm always happy the day when I make 4*d.*, for then I know I won't have to sleep in the street. The winter before last, there was a straw-yard down in Black Jack's-alley, where we used to go after six o'clock in the evening, and get ½ lb. of bread, and another ½ lb. in the morning, and then we'd gather what we could in the daytime and buy victuals with what we got for it. We were well off then, but the straw-yard wasn't open at all last winter. There used to be 300 of us in there of a night, a great many of the dock-labourers and their families were there, for no work was to be got in the docks; so they weren't able to pay rent, and were obliged to go in. I've lost my health since I took to bone-picking, through the wet and cold in the winter, for I've scarcely any clothes, and the wet gets to my feet through the old shoes; this caused me last winter to be nine weeks in the hospital of the Whitechapel workhouse."

The narrator of this tale seemed so dejected and broken in spirit, that it was with difficulty his story was elicited from him. He was evidently labouring under incipient consumption. I have every reason to believe that he made a truthful statement,—indeed, he did not appear to me to have sufficient intellect to invent a falsehood. It is a curious fact, indeed, with reference to the London street-finders generally, that they seem to possess less rational power than any other class. They appear utterly incapable of trading even in the most trifling commodities, probably from the fact that buying articles for the purpose of selling them at a profit, requires an exercise of the mind to which they feel themselves incapable. Begging, too, requires some ingenuity or tact, in order to move the sympathies of the well-to-do, and the street-finders being incompetent for this, they work on day after day as long as they are able to crawl about in pursuit of their unprofitable calling. This cannot be fairly said of the younger members of this class, who are sent into the streets by their parents, and many of whom are afterwards able to find some more reputable and more lucrative employment. As a body of people, however, young and old, they mostly exhibit the same stupid, half-witted appearance.

To show how bone-grubbers occasionally manage to obtain shelter during the night, the following incident may not be out of place. A few mornings past I accidentally encountered one of this class in a narrow back lane; his ragged coat—the colour of the rubbish among which he toiled—was greased over, probably with the fat of the bones he gathered, and being mixed with the dust it seemed as if the man were covered with bird-lime. His shoes—torn and tied on his feet with pieces of cord—had doubtlessly been picked out of some dust-bin, while his greasy bag and stick unmistakably announced his calling. Desirous of obtaining all the information possible on this subject, I asked him a few questions, took his address, which he gave without hesitation, and bade him call on me in the evening. At the time appointed, however, he did not appear; on the following day therefore I made way to the address he had given, and on reaching the spot I was astonished to find the house in which he had said he lived was uninhabited. A padlock was on the door, the boards of which were parting with age. There was not a whole pane of glass in any of the windows, and the frames of many of them were shattered or demolished. Some persons in the neighbourhood, noticing me eyeing the place, asked whom I wanted. On my telling the man's name, which it appeared he had not dreamt of disguising, I was informed that he had left the day before, saying he had met the landlord in the morning (for such it turned out he had fancied me to be), and that the gentleman had wanted him to come to his house, but he was afraid to go lest he should be sent to prison for breaking into the place. I found, on inspection, that the premises, though locked up, could be entered by the rear, one of the window-frames having been removed, so that admission could be obtained through the aperture. Availing myself of the same mode of ingress, I proceeded to examine the premises. Nothing could well be more dismal or dreary than the interior. The floors were rotting with damp and mildew, especially near the windows, where the wet found easy entrance. The walls were even slimy and discoloured, and everything bore the appearance of desolation. In one corner was strewn a bundle of dirty straw, which doubtlessly had served the bone-grubber for a bed, while scattered about the floor were pieces of bones, and small fragments of dirty rags, sufficient to indicate the calling of the late inmate. He had had but little difficulty in removing his property, seeing that it consisted solely of his bag and his stick.

The following paragraph concerning the chiffonniers or rag-gatherers of Paris appeared in the London journals a few weeks since:—

"The fraternal association of rag-gatherers (chiffonniers) gave a grand banquet on Saturday last (21st of June). It took place at a public-house called the *Pot Tricolore*, near the *Barrière de Fontainebleau*, which is frequented by the rag-gathering fraternity. In this house there are three rooms, each of which is specially devoted to the use of different classes of rag-gatherers: one, the least dirty, is called the 'Chamber of Peers,

and is occupied by the first class—that is, those who possess a basket in a good state, and a crook ornamented with copper; the second, called the ‘Chamber of Deputies,’ belonging to the second class, is much less comfortable, and those who attend it have baskets and crooks not of first-rate quality; the third room is in a dilapidated condition, and is frequented by the lowest class of rag-gatherers who have no basket or crook, and who place what they find in the streets in a piece of sackcloth. They call themselves the *Réunion des Vrais Proletaires*. The name of each room is written in chalk above the door; and generally such strict etiquette is observed among the rag-gatherers that no one goes into the apartment not occupied by his own class. At Saturday’s banquet, however, all distinctions of rank were laid aside, and delegates of each class united fraternally. The president was the oldest rag-gatherer in Paris; his age is 88, and he is called ‘the Emperor.’ The banquet consisted of a sort of *olla podrida*, which the master of the establishment pompously called *gibelotte*, though of what animal it was composed it was impossible to say. It was served up in huge earthen dishes, and before it was allowed to be touched payment was demanded and obtained; the other articles were also paid for as soon as they were brought in; and a deposit was exacted as a security for the plates, knives, and forks. The wine, or what did duty as such, was contained in an earthen pot called the *Petit Père Noir*, and was filled from a gigantic vessel named *Le Moricaud*. The dinner was concluded by each guest taking a small glass of brandy. Business was then proceeded to. It consisted in the reading and adoption of the statutes of the association, followed by the drinking of numerous toasts to the president, to the prosperity of rag-gathering, to the union of rag-gatherers, &c. A collection amounting to 6*l.* 7*5c.* was raised for sick members of the fraternity. The guests then dispersed; but several of them remained at the counter until they had consumed in brandy the amount deposited as security for the crockery, knives, and forks.”

#### OF THE “PURE”-FINDERS.

Dogs’-dung is called “Pure,” from its cleansing and purifying properties.

The name of “Pure-finders,” however, has been applied to the men engaged in collecting dogs’-dung from the public streets only, within the last 20 or 30 years. Previous to this period there appears to have been no men engaged in the business, old women alone gathered the substance, and they were known by the name of “bunters,” which signifies properly gatherers of rags; and thus plainly intimates that the rag-gatherers originally added the collecting of “Pure” to their original and proper vocation. Hence it appears that the bone-grubbers, rag-gatherers, and pure-finders, constituted formerly but one class of people, and even now they have, as I have stated, kindred characteristics.

The pure-finders meet with a ready market for all the dogs’-dung they are able to collect, at the nume-

rous tanyards in Bermondsey, where they sell it by the stable-bucket full, and get from 8*d.* to 10*d.* per bucket, and sometimes 1*s.* and 1*s.* 2*d.* for it, according to its quality. The “dry limy-looking sort” fetches the highest price at some yards, as it is found to possess more of the alkaline, or purifying properties; but others are found to prefer the dark moist quality. Strange as it may appear, the preference for a particular kind has suggested to the finders of Pure the idea of adulterating it to a very considerable extent; this is effected by means of mortar broken away from old walls, and mixed up with the whole mass, which it closely resembles; in some cases, however, the mortar is rolled into small balls similar to those found. Hence it would appear, that there is no business or trade, however insignificant or contemptible, without its own peculiar and appropriate tricks.

The pure-finders are in their habits and mode of proceeding nearly similar to the bone-grubbers. Many of the pure-finders are, however, better in circumstances, the men especially, as they earn more money. They are also, to a certain extent, a better educated class. Some of the regular collectors of this substance have been mechanics, and others small tradesmen, who have been reduced. Those pure-finders who have “a good connection,” and have been granted permission to cleanse some kennels, obtain a very fair living at the business, earning from 10*s.* to 15*s.* a week. These, however, are very few; the majority have to seek the article in the streets, and by such means they can obtain only from 6*s.* to 10*s.* a week. The average weekly earnings of this class are thought to be about 7*s.* 6*d.*

From all the inquiries I have made on this subject, I have found that there cannot be less than from 200 to 300 persons constantly engaged solely in this business. There are about 30 tanyards large and small in Bermondsey, and these all have their regular Pure collectors from whom they obtain the article. Leomont and Roberts’s, Bavington’s, Beech’s, Murrell’s, Cheeseman’s, Powell’s, Jones’s, Jourdan’s, Kent’s, Moorcroft’s, and Davis’s, are among the largest establishments, and some idea of the amount of business done in some of these yards may be formed from the fact, that the proprietors severally employ from 300 to 500 tanners. At Leomont and Roberts’s there are 23 regular street-finders, who supply them with pure, but this is a large establishment, and the number supplying them is considered far beyond the average quantity; moreover, Messrs. Leomont and Roberts do more business in the particular branch of tanning in which the article is principally used, viz., in dressing the leather for book-covers, kid-gloves, and a variety of other articles. Some of the other tanyards, especially the smaller ones, take the substance only as they happen to want it, and others again employ but a limited number of hands. If, therefore, we strike an average, and reduce the number supplying each of the several yards to eight, we shall have 240 persons regularly engaged in the business: besides these, it may be said that numbers of the starving and destitute Irish have taken to picking up the ma-

terial, but not knowing where to sell it, or how to dispose of it, they part with it for 2*d.* or 3*d.* the pail-full to the regular purveyors of it to the tanyards, who of course make a considerable profit by the transaction. The children of the poor Irish are usually employed in this manner, but they also pick up rags and bones, and anything else which may fall in their way.

I have stated that some of the pure-finders, especially the men, earn a considerable sum of money per week; their gains are sometimes as much as 15*s.*; indeed I am assured that seven years ago, when they got from 3*s.* to 4*s.* per pail for the pure, that many of them would not exchange their position with that of the best paid mechanic in London. Now, however, the case is altered, for there are twenty now at the business for every one who followed it then; hence each collects so much the less in quantity, and, moreover, from the competition gets so much less for the article. Some of the collectors at present do not earn 3*s.* per week, but these are mostly old women who are feeble and unable to get over the ground quickly; others make 5*s.* and 6*s.* in the course of the week, while the most active and those who clean out the kennels of the dog fanciers may occasionally make 9*s.* and 10*s.* and even 15*s.* a week still, but this is of very rare occurrence. Allowing the finders, one with the other, to earn on an average 5*s.* per week, it would give the annual earnings of each to be 13*l.*, while the income of the whole 200 would amount to 50*l.* a week, or 2600*l.* per annum. The kennel “pure” is not much valued, indeed many of the tanners will not even buy it, the reason is that the dogs of the “fanciers” are fed on almost anything, to save expense; the kennel cleaners consequently take the precaution of mixing it with what is found in the street, previous to offering it for sale.

The pure-finder may at once be distinguished from the bone-grubber and rag-gatherer; the latter, as I have before mentioned, carries a bag, and usually a stick armed with a spike, while he is most frequently to be met with in back streets, narrow lanes, yards and other places, where dust and rubbish are likely to be thrown out from the adjacent houses. The pure-finder, on the contrary, is often found in the open streets, as dogs wander where they like. The pure-finders always carry a handle basket, generally with a cover, to hide the contents, and have their right hand covered with a black leather glove; many of them, however, dispense with the glove, as they say it is much easier to wash their hands than to keep the glove fit for use. The women generally have a large pocket for the reception of such rags as they may chance to fall in with, but they pick up those only of the very best quality, and will not go out of their way to search even for them. Thus equipped they may be seen pursuing their avocation in almost every street in and about London, excepting such streets as are now cleansed by the “street orderlies,” of whom the pure-finders grievously complain, as being an unwarrantable interference with the privileges of their class.

The pure collected is used by leather-dressers and tanners, and more especially by those engaged in the manufacture of morocco and kid leather from the skins of old and young goats, of which skins great numbers are imported, and of the roans and lambskins which are the sham morocco and kids of the “slop” leather trade, and are used by the better class of shoemakers, bookbinders, and glovers, for the inferior requirements of their business. Pure is also used by tanners, as is pigeon’s dung, for the tanning of the thinner kinds of leather, such as calf-skins, for which purpose it is placed in pits with an admixture of lime and bark.

In the manufacture of moroccos and roans the pure is rubbed by the hands of the workman into the skin he is dressing. This is done to “purify” the leather, I was told by an intelligent leather-dresser, and from that term the word “pure” has originated. The dung has astringent as well as highly alkaline, or, to use the expression of my informant, “scouring,” qualities. When the pure has been rubbed into the flesh and grain of the skin (the “flesh” being originally the interior, and the “grain” the exterior part of the cuticle), and the skin, thus purified, has been hung up to be dried, the dung removes, as it were, all such moisture as, if allowed to remain, would tend to make the leather unsound or imperfectly dressed. This imperfect dressing, moreover, gives a disagreeable smell to the leather—and leather-buyers often use both nose and tongue in making their purchases—and would consequently prevent that agreeable odour being imparted to the skin which is found in some kinds of morocco and kid. The peculiar odour of the Russia leather, so agreeable in the libraries of the rich, is derived from the bark of young birch trees. It is now manufactured in Bermondsey.

Among the morocco manufacturers, especially among the old operatives, there is often a scarcity of employment, and they then dress a few roans, which they hawk to the cheap warehouses, or sell to the wholesale shoemakers on their own account. These men usually reside in small garrets in the poorer parts of Bermondsey, and carry on their trade in their own rooms, using and keeping the pure there; hence the “homes” of these poor men are peculiarly uncomfortable, if not unhealthy. Some of these poor fellows or their wives collect the pure themselves, often starting at daylight for the purpose; they more frequently, however, buy it of a regular finder.

The number of pure-finders I heard estimated, by a man well acquainted with the tanning and other departments of the leather trade, at from 200 to 250. The finders, I was informed by the same person, collected about a pail-full a day, clearing 6*s.* a week in the summer—1*s.* and 1*s.* 2*d.* being the charge for a pail-full; in the short days of winter, however, and in bad weather, they could not collect five pail-fulls in a week.

In the wretched locality already referred to as lying between the Docks and Rosemary-lane, redolent of filth and pregnant with pestilential diseases, and whither all the outcasts of the metropolitan

population seem to be drawn, either in the hope of finding fitting associates and companions in their wretchedness (for there is doubtlessly something attractive and agreeable to them in such companionship), or else for the purpose of hiding themselves and their shifts and struggles for existence from the world,—in this dismal quarter, and branching from one of the many narrow lanes which interlace it, there is a little court with about half-a-dozen houses of the very smallest dimensions, consisting of merely two rooms, one over the other. Here in one of the upper rooms (the lower one of the same house being occupied by another family and apparently filled with little ragged children), I discerned, after considerable difficulty, an old woman, a Pure-finder. When I opened the door the little light that struggled through the small window, the many broken panes of which were stuffed with old rags, was not sufficient to enable me to perceive who or what was in the room. After a short time, however, I began to make out an old chair standing near the fire-place, and then to discover a poor old woman resembling a bundle of rags and filth stretched on some dirty straw in the corner of the apartment. The place was bare and almost naked. There was nothing in it except a couple of old tin kettles and a basket, and some broken crockeryware in the recess of the window. To my astonishment I found this wretched creature to be, to a certain extent, a "superior" woman; she could read and write well, spoke correctly, and appeared to have been a spouse of natural good sense, though broken up with age, want, and infirmity, so that she was characterized by all that dull and hardened stupidity of manner which I have noticed in the class. She made the following statement:—

"I am about 60 years of age. My father was a milkman, and very well off; he had a barn and a great many cows. I was kept at school till I was thirteen or fourteen years of age; about that time my father died, and then I was taken home to help my mother in the business. After a while things went wrong; the cows began to die, and mother, alleging she could not manage the business herself, married again. I soon found out the difference. Glad to get away, anywhere out of the house, I married a sailor, and was very comfortable with him for some years; as he made short voyages, and was often at home, and always eft me half his pay. At last he was pressed, when at home with me, and sent away; I forget now where he was sent to, but I never saw him from that day to this. The only thing I know is that some sailors came to me four or five years after, and told me that he deserted from the ship in which he had gone out, and got on board the *Neptune*, East Indiaman, bound for Bombay, where he acted as boatswain's mate; some little time afterwards, he had got intoxicated while the ship was lying in harbour, and, going down the side to get into a bumboat, and buy more drink, he had fallen overboard and was drowned. I got some money that was due to him from the India House, and, after that was all gone, I went into service, in the Mile-end Road. There

I stayed for several years, till I met my second husband, who was bred to the water, too, but as a waterman on the river. We did very well together for a long time, till he lost his health. He became paralyzed like, and was deprived of the use of all one side, and nearly lost the sight of one of his eyes; this was not very conspicuous at first, but when we came to get pinched, and to be badly off, then any one might have seen that there was something the matter with his eye. Then we parted with everything we had in the world; and, at last, when we had no other means of living left, we were advised to take to gathering 'Pure.' At first I couldn't endure the business; I couldn't bear to eat a morsel, and I was obliged to discontinue it for a long time. My husband kept at it though, for he could do that well enough, only he couldn't walk as fast as he ought. He couldn't lift his hands as high as his head, but he managed to work under him, and so put the Pure in the basket. When I saw that he, poor fellow, couldn't make enough to keep us both, I took heart and went out again, and used to gather more than he did; that's fifteen years ago now; the times were good then, and we used to do very well. If we only gathered a pail-full in the day, we could live very well; but we could do much more than that, for there wasn't near so many at the business then, and the Pure was easier to be had. For my part I can't tell where all the poor creatures have come from of late years; the world seems growing worse and worse every day. They have pulled down the price of Pure, that's certain; but the poor things must do something, they can't starve while there's anything to be got. Why, no later than six or seven years ago, it was as high as 3s. 6d. and 4s. a pail-full, and a ready sale for as much of it as you could get; but now you can only get 1s. and in some places 1s. 2d. a pail-full; and, as I said before, there are so many at it, that there is not much left for a poor old creature like me to find. The men that are strong and smart get the most, of course, and some of them do very well, at least they manage to live. Six years ago, my husband complained that he was ill, in the evening, and lay down in the bed—we lived in Whitechapel then—he took a fit of coughing, and was smothered in his own blood. O dear" (the poor old soul here ejaculated), "what troubles I have gone through! I had eight children at one time, and there is not one of them alive now. My daughter lived to 30 years of age, and then she died in childbirth, and, since then, I have had nobody in the wide world to care for me—none but myself, all alone as I am. After my husband's death I couldn't do much, and all my things went away, one by one, until I've nothing but bare walls, and that's the reason why I was vexed at first at your coming in, sir. I was yesterday out all day, and went round Aldgate, Whitechapel, St. George's East, Stepney, Bow, and Bromley, and then came home; after that, I went over to Bermondsey, and there I got only 6d. for my pains. To-day I wasn't out at all; I wasn't well; I had a bad headache, and I'm so much afraid of the fevers that are all about

here—though I don't know why I should be afraid of them—I was lying down, when you came, to get rid of my pains. There's such a dizziness in my head now, I feel as if it didn't belong to me. No, I have earned no money to-day. I have had a piece of dried bread that I steeped in water to eat. I haven't eat anything else to-day; but, pray, sir, don't tell anybody of it. I could never bear the thought of going into the 'great house' [workhouse]; I'm so used to the air, that I'd sooner die in the street, as many I know have done. I've known several of our people, who have sat down in the street with their basket alongside them, and died. I knew one not long ago, who took ill just as she was stooping down to gather up the Pure, and fell on her face; she was taken to the London Hospital, and died at three o'clock in the morning. I'd sooner die like them than be deprived of my liberty, and be prevented from going about where I liked. No, I'll never go into the workhouse; my master is kind to me" [the tanner whom she supplies]. "When I'm ill, he sometimes gives me a sixpence; but there's one gentleman has done us great harm, by forcing so many into the business. He's a poor-law guardian, and when any poor person applies for relief, he tells them to go and gather Pure, and that he'll buy it of them (for he's in the line), and so the parish, you see, don't have to give anything, and that's one way that so many have come into the trade of late, that the likes of me can do little or no good at it. Almost every one I've ever known engaged at Pure-finding were people who were better off once. I knew a man who went by the name of Brown, who picked up Pure for years before I went to it; he was a very quiet man; he used to lodge in Blue Anchor-yard, and seldom used to speak to anybody. We two used to talk together sometimes, but never much. One morning he was found dead in his bed; it was of a Tuesday morning, and he was buried about 12 o'clock on the Friday following. About 6 o'clock on that afternoon, three or four gentlemen came searching all through this place, looking for a man named Brown, and offering a reward to any who would find him out; there was a whole crowd about them when I came up. One of the gentlemen said that the man they wanted had lost the first finger of his right hand, and then I knew that it was the man that had been buried only that morning. Would you believe it, Mr. Brown was a real gentleman all the time, and had a large estate, of I don't know how many thousand pounds, just left him, and the lawyers had advertised and searched everywhere for him, but never found him, you may say, till he was dead. We discovered that his name was not Brown; he had only taken that name to hide his real one, which, of course, he did not want any one to know. I've often thought of him, poor man, and all the misery he might have been spared, if the good news had only come a year or two sooner."

Another informant, a Pure-collector, was originally in the Manchester cotton trade, and held a lucrative situation in a large country establishment. His salary one year exceeded 250*l.*, and

his regular income was 150*l.* "This," he says, "I lost through drink and neglect. My master was exceedingly kind to me, and has even assisted me since I left his employ. He bore with me patiently for many years, but the love of drink was so strong upon me that it was impossible for him to keep me any longer." He has often been drunk, he tells me, for three months together; and he is now so reduced that he is ashamed to be seen. When at his master's it was his duty to carve and help the other assistants belonging to the establishment, and his hand used to shake so violently that he has been ashamed to lift the gravy spoon.

At breakfast he has frequently waited till all the young men had left the table before he ventured to taste his tea; and immediately, when he was alone, he has bent his head down to his cup to drink, being utterly incapable of raising it to his lips. He says he is a living example of the degrading influence of drink. All his friends have deserted him. He has suffered enough, he tells me, to make him give it up. He earned the week before I saw him 5s. 2*d.*; and the week before that, 6s.

Before leaving me I prevailed upon the man to "take the pledge." This is now eighteen months ago, and I have not seen him since.

#### OF THE CIGAR-END FINDERS.

THERE are, strictly speaking, none who make a living by picking up the ends of cigars thrown away as useless by the smokers in the streets, but there are very many who employ themselves from time to time in collecting them. Almost all the street-finders, when they meet with such things, pick them up, and keep them in a pocket set apart for that purpose. The men allow the ends to accumulate till they amount to two or three pounds weight, and then some dispose of them to a person residing in the neighbourhood of Rosemary-lane, who buys them all up at from 6*d.* to 10*d.* per pound, according to their length and quality. The long ends are considered the best, as I am told there is more sound tobacco in them, uninjured by the moisture of the mouth. The children of the poor Irish, in particular, scour Ratcliff-highway, the Commercial-road, Mile-end-road, and all the leading thoroughfares of the East, and every place where cigar smokers are likely to take an evening's promenade. The quantity that each of them collects is very trifling indeed—perhaps not more than a handful during a morning's search. I am informed, by an intelligent man living in the midst of them, that these children go out in the morning not only to gather cigar-ends, but to pick up out of dust bins, and from amongst rubbish in the streets, the smallest scraps and crusts of bread, no matter how hard or filthy they may be. These they put into a little bag which they carry for the purpose, and, after they have gone their rounds and collected whatever they can, they take the cigar-ends to the man who buys them—sometimes getting not more than a halfpenny or a penny for their morning's collection. With this they buy a halfpenny or a penny-

worth of oatmeal, which they mix up with a large quantity of water, and after washing and steeping the hard and dirty crusts, they put them into the pot or kettle and boil all together. Of this mass the whole family partake, and it often constitutes all the food they taste in the course of the day. I have often seen the bone-grubbers eat the black and soddened crusts they have picked up out of the gutter.

It would, indeed, be a hopeless task to make any attempt to get at the number of persons who occasionally or otherwise pick up cigar-ends with the view of selling them again. For this purpose almost all who ransack the streets of London for a living may be computed as belonging to the class; and to these should be added the children of the thousands of destitute Irish who have inundated the metropolis within the last few years, and who are to be found huddled together in all the low neighbourhoods in every suburb of the City. What quantity is collected, or the amount of money obtained for the ends, there are no means of ascertaining.

Let us, however, make a conjecture. There are in round numbers 300,000 inhabited houses in the metropolis; and allowing the married people living in apartments to be equal in number to the unmarried "housekeepers," we may compute that the number of families in London is about the same as the inhabited houses. Assuming one young or old gentleman in every ten of these families to smoke one cigar per diem in the public thoroughfares, we have 30,000 cigar-ends daily, or 210,000 weekly cast away in the London streets. Now, reckoning 150 cigars to go to a pound, we may assume that each end so cast away weighs about the thousandth part of a pound; consequently the gross weight of the ends flung into the gutter will, in the course of the week, amount to about 2 cwt.; and calculating that only a sixth part of these are picked up by the finders, it follows that there is very nearly a ton of refuse tobacco collected annually in the metropolitan thoroughfares.

The aristocratic quarters of the City and the vicinity of theatres and casinos are the best for the cigar-end finders. In the Strand, Regent-street, and the more fashionable thoroughfares, I am told, there are many ends picked up; but even in these places they do not exclusively furnish a means of living to any of the finders. All the collectors sell them to some other person, who acts as middle-man in the business. How he disposes of the ends is unknown, but it is supposed that they are resold to some of the large manufacturers of cigars, and go to form the component part of a new stock of the "best Havannahs;" or, in other words, they are worked up again to be again cast away, and again collected by the finders, and so on perhaps, till the millennium comes. Some suppose them to be cut up and mixed with the common smoking tobacco, and others that they are used in making snuff. There are, I am assured, five persons residing in different parts of London, who are known to purchase the cigar-ends.

In Naples the sale of cigar-ends is a regular street-traffic, the street-seller carrying them in a small box suspended round the neck. In Paris, also, *le Remasseur de Cigares* is a well-known occupation: the "ends" thus collected are sold as cheap tobacco to the poor. In the low lodging-houses of London the ends, when dried, are cut up, and frequently vended by the finders to such of their fellow-lodgers as are anxious to enjoy their pipe at the cheapest possible rate.

#### OF THE OLD WOOD GATHERERS.

ALL that has been said of the cigar-end finders may, in a great measure, apply to the wood-gatherers. No one can make a living exclusively by the gathering of wood, and those who *do* gather it, gather as well rags, bones, and bits of metal. They gather it, indeed, as an adjunct to their other findings, on the principle that "every little helps." Those, however, who most frequently look for wood are the very old and feeble, and the very young, who are both unable to travel far, or to carry a heavy burden, and they may occasionally be seen crawling about in the neighbourhood of any new buildings in the course of construction, or old ones in the course of demolition, and picking up small odds and ends of wood and chips swept out amongst dirt and shavings; these they deposit in a bag or basket which they carry for that purpose. Should there happen to be what they call "pulling-down work," that is, taking down old houses, or palings, the place is immediately beset by a number of wood-gatherers, young and old, and in general all the poor people of the locality join with them, to obtain their share of the spoil. What the poor get they take home and burn, but the wood-gatherers sell all they procure for some small trifle.

Some short time ago a portion of the wood-pavement in the city was being removed; a large number of the old blocks, which were much worn and of no further use, were thrown aside, and became the perquisite of the wood-gatherers. During the repair of the street, the spot was constantly besieged by a motley mob of men, women, and children, who, in many instances, struggled and fought for the wood rejected as worthless. This wood they either sold for a trifle as they got it, or took home and split, and made into bundles for sale as firewood.

All the mudlarks (of whom I shall treat specially) pick up wood and chips on the bank of the river; these they sell to poor people in their own neighbourhood. They sometimes "find" large pieces of a greater weight than they can carry; in such cases they get some other mudlark to help them with the load, and the two "go halves" in the produce. The only parties among the street-finders who do not pick up wood are the Pure-collectors and the sewer-hunters, or, as they call themselves, shore-workers, both of whom pass it by as of no value.

It is impossible to estimate the quantity of wood which is thus gathered, or what the amount may be which the collector realizes in the course of the year.



THE SEWER-HUNTER.

[From a Photograph.]

## OF THE DREDGERS, OR RIVER FINDERS.

THE dredgermen of the Thames, or river finders, naturally occupy the same place with reference to the street-finders, as the purmen or river beer-sellers do to those who get their living by selling in the streets. It would be in itself a curious inquiry to trace the origin of the manifold occupations in which men are found to be engaged in the present day, and to note how promptly every circumstance and occurrence was laid hold of, as it happened to arise, which appeared to have any tendency to open up a new occupation, and to mark the gradual progress, till it became a regularly-established employment, followed by a separate class of people, fenced round by rules and customs of their own, and who at length grew to be both in their habits and peculiarities plainly distinct from the other classes among whom they chanced to be located.

There has been no historian among the dredgers of the Thames to record the commencement of the business, and the utmost that any of the river-finders can tell is that his father had been a dredger, and so had his father before him, and that *that's* the reason why they are dredgers also. But no such people as dredgers were known on the Thames in remote days; and before London had become an important trading port, where nothing was likely to be got for the searching, it is not probable that people would have been induced to search. In those days, the only things searched for in the river were the bodies of persons drowned, accidentally or otherwise. For this purpose, the Thames fishermen of all others, appeared to be the best adapted. They were on the spot at all times, and had various sorts of tackle, such as nets, lines, hooks, &c. The fishermen well understood everything connected with the river, such as the various sets of the tide, and the nature of the bottom, and they were therefore on such occasions invariably applied to for these purposes.

It is known to all who remember anything of Old London Bridge, that at certain times of the tide, in consequence of the velocity with which the water rushed through the narrow apertures which the arches then afforded for its passage, to bring a boat in safety through the bridge was a feat to be attempted only by the skilful and experienced. This feat was known as "shooting" London Bridge; and it was no unusual thing for accidents to happen even to the most expert. In fact, numerous accidents occurred at this bridge, and at such times valuable articles were sometimes lost, for which high rewards were offered to the finder. Here again the fishermen came into requisition, the small drag-net, which they used while rowing, offering itself for the purpose; for, by fixing an iron frame round the mouth of the drag-net, this part of it, from its specific gravity, sunk first to the bottom, and consequently scraped along as they pulled forward, collecting into the net everything that came in its way; when it was nearly filled, which the rower always knew by the weight, it was hauled up to

the surface, its contents examined, and the object lost generally recovered.

It is thus apparent that the fishermen of the Thames were the men originally employed as dredgermen; though casually, indeed, at first, and according as circumstances occurred requiring their services. By degrees, however, as the commerce of the river increased, and a greater number of articles fell overboard from the shipping, they came to be more frequently called into requisition, and so they were naturally led to adopt the dredging as part and parcel of their business. Thus it remains to the present day.

The fishermen all serve a regular apprenticeship, as they say themselves, "duly and truly" for seven years. During the time of their apprenticeship they are (or rather, in former times they *were*) obliged to sleep in their master's boat at night to take care of his property, and were subject to many other curious regulations, which are foreign to this subject.

I have said that the fishermen of the Thames to the present day unite the dredging to their proper calling. By this I mean that they employ themselves in fishing during the summer and autumn, either from Barking Creek downwards, or from Chelsea Reach upwards, catching dabs, flounders, eels, and other sorts of fish for the London markets. But in winter when the days are short and cold, and the weather stormy, they prefer stopping at home, and dredging the bed of the river for anything they may chance to find. There are others, however, who have started wholly in the dredging line, there being no hindrance or impediment to any one doing so, nor any licence required for the purpose: these dredge the river winter and summer alike, and are, in fact, the only real dredgermen of the present day living solely by that occupation.

There are in all about 100 dredgermen at work on the river, and these are located as follows:—

	Dredgermen.
From Putney to Vauxhall there are	20
From Vauxhall to London-bridge	40
From London-bridge to Deptford	20
And from Deptford to Gravesend	20
	100

All these reside, in general, on the south side of the Thames, the two places most frequented by them being Lambeth and Rotherhithe. They do not, however, confine themselves to the neighbourhoods wherein they reside, but extend their operations to all parts of the river, where it is likely that they may pick up anything; and it is perfectly marvellous with what rapidity the intelligence of any accident calculated to afford them employment is spread among them; for should a loaded coal barge be sunk over night, by daylight the next morning every dredgerman would be sure to be upon the spot, prepared to collect what he could from the wreck at the bottom of the river.

The boats of the dredgermen are of a peculiar shape. They have no stern, but are the same

fore and aft. They are called Peter boats, but not one of the men with whom I spoke had the least idea as to the origin of the name. These boats are to be had at almost all prices, according to their condition and age—from 30s. to 20l. The boats used by the fishermen dredgers are decidedly the most valuable. One with the other, perhaps the whole may average 10l. each; and this sum will give 1000l. as the value of the entire number. A complete set of tackle, including drags, will cost 2l., which comes to 200l. for all hands; and thus we have the sum of 1200l. as the amount of capital invested in the dredging of the Thames.

It is by no means an easy matter to form any estimate of the earnings of the dredgers, as they are a matter of mere chance. In former years, when Indiamen and all the foreign shipping lay in the river, the river finders were in the habit of doing a good business, not only in their own line, through the greater quantities of rope, bones, and other things which then were thrown or fell overboard, but they also contrived to smuggle ashore great quantities of tobacco, tea, spirits, and other contraband articles, and thought it a bad day's work when they did not earn a pound independent of their dredging. An old dredger told me he had often in those days made 5l. before breakfast time. After the excavation of the various docks, and after the larger shipping had departed from the river, the finders were obliged to content themselves with the chances of mere dredging; and even then, I am informed, they were in the habit of earning one week with another throughout the year, about 25s. per week, each, or 6500l. per annum among all. Latterly, however, the earnings of these men have greatly fallen off, especially in the summer, for then they cannot get so good a price for the coal they find as in the winter—6d. per bushel being the summer price; and, as they consider three bushels a good day's work, their earnings at this period of the year amount only to 1s. 6d. per day, excepting when they happen to pick up some bones or pieces of metal, or to find a dead body for which there is a reward. In the winter, however, the dredgers can readily get 1s. per bushel for all the coals they find; and far more coals are to be found then than in summer, for there are more colliers in the river, and far more accidents at that season. Coal barges are often sunk in the winter, and on such occasions they make a good harvest. Moreover there is the finding of bodies, for which they not only get the reward, but 5s., which they call inquest money; together with many other chances, such as the finding of money and valuables among the rubbish they bring up from the bottom; but as the last-mentioned are accidents happening throughout the year, I am inclined to think that they have understated the amount which they are in the habit of realizing even in the summer.

The dredgers, as a class, may be said to be altogether uneducated, not half a dozen out of the whole number being able to read their own name, and only one or two to write it; this select few are considered by the rest as perfect

prodigies. "Lor' bless you!" said one, "I on'y wish you'd 'ear Bill S— read; I on'y jist wish you'd 'ear him. Why that ere Bill can read faster nor a dog can trot. And, what's more, I seed him write an oie letter hisself, ev'ry word on it! What do you think o' that now?" The ignorance of the dredgers may be accounted for by the men taking so early to the water; the bustle and excitement of the river being far more attractive to them than the routine of a school. Almost as soon as they are able to do anything, the dredgers' boys are taken by their fathers afloat to assist in picking out the coals, bones, and other things of any use, from the midst of the rubbish brought up in their drag-nets; or else the lads are sent on board as assistants to one or other of the fishermen during their fishing voyages. When once engaged in this way it has been found impossible afterwards to keep the youths from the water; and if they have learned anything previously they very soon forget it.

It might be expected that the dredgers, in a manner depending on chance for their livelihood, and leading a restless sort of life on the water, would closely resemble the costermongers in their habits; but it is far otherwise. There can be no two classes more dissimilar, except in their hatred of restraint. The dredgers are sober and steady; gambling is unknown amongst them; and they are, to an extraordinary degree, laborious, persevering, and patient. They are in general men of short stature, but square built, strong, and capable of enduring great fatigue, and have a silent and thoughtful look. Being almost always alone, and studying how they may best succeed in finding what they seek, marking the various sets of the tide, and the direction in which things falling into the water at a particular place must necessarily be carried, they become the very opposite to the other river people, especially to the watermen, who are brawling and clamorous, and delight in continually "chaffing" each other. In consequence of the sober and industrious habits of the dredgers their homes are, as they say, "pretty fair" for working men, though there is nothing very luxurious to be found in them, nor indeed anything beyond what is absolutely necessary. After their day's work, especially if they have "done well," these men smoke a pipe over a pint or two of beer at the nearest public-house, get home early to bed, and if the tide answers may be found on the river patiently dredging away at two or three o'clock in the morning.

Whenever a loaded coal barge happens to sink, as I have already intimated, it is surprising how short a time elapses before that part of the river is alive with the dredgers. They flock thither from all parts. The river on such occasions presents a very animated appearance. At first they are all in a group, and apparently in confusion, crossing and re-crossing each other's course; some with their oars pulled in while they examine the contents of their nets, and empty the coals into the bottom of their boats; others rowing and tugging against the stream, to obtain an advan-

tageous position for the next cast; and when they consider they have found this, down go the dredging-nets to the bottom, and away they row again with the stream, as if pulling for a wager, till they find by the weight of their net that it is full; then they at once stop, haul it to the surface, and commence another course. Others who have been successful in getting their boats loaded may be seen pushing away from the main body, and making towards the shore. Here they busily employ themselves, with what help they can get, in emptying the boat of her cargo—carrying it ashore in old coal baskets, bushel measures, or anything else which will suit their purpose; and when this is completed they pull out again to join their comrades, and commence afresh. They continue working thus till the returning tide puts an end to their labours, but these are resumed after the tide has fallen to a certain depth; and so they go on, working night and day while there is anything to be got.

The dredgerman and his boat may be immediately distinguished from all others; there is nothing similar to them on the river. The sharp cutwater fore and aft, and short rounded appearance of the vessel, marks it out at once from the skiff or wherry of the waterman. There is, too, always the appearance of labour about the boat, like a ship returning after a long voyage, daubed and filthy, and looking sadly in need of a thorough cleansing. The grappling irons are over the bow, resting on a coil of rope; while the other end of the boat is filled with coals, bones, and old rope, mixed with the mud of the river. The ropes of the dredging-net hang over the side. A short stout figure, with a face soiled and blackened with perspiration, and surmounted by a tarred sou'-wester, the body habited in a soiled check shirt, with the sleeves turned up above the elbows, and exhibiting a pair of sunburnt brawny arms, is pulling at the sculls, not with the ease and lightness of the waterman, but toiling and tugging away like a galley slave, as he scours the bed of the river with his dredging-net in search of some hoped-for prize.

The dredgers, as was before stated, are the men who find almost all the bodies of persons drowned. If there be a reward offered for the recovery of a body, numbers of the dredgers will at once endeavour to obtain it, while if there be no reward, there is at least the inquest money to be had—beside other chances. What these chances are may be inferred from the well-known fact, that no body recovered by a dredgerman ever happens to have any money about it, when brought to shore. There may, indeed, be a watch in the fob or waistcoat pocket, for that article would be likely to be traced. There may, too, be a purse or pocket-book forthcoming, but somehow it is invariably empty. The dredgers cannot by any reasoning or argument be made to comprehend that there is anything like dishonesty in emptying the pockets of a dead man. They consider them as their just perquisites. They say that any one who finds a body does precisely the same, and that if they did not do so the police would. After having

had all the trouble and labour, they allege that they have a much better right to whatever is to be got, than the police who have had nothing whatever to do with it. There are also people who shrewdly suspect that some of the coals from the barges lying in the river, very often find their way into the dredgers' boats, especially when the dredgers are engaged in night-work; and there are even some who do not hold them guiltless of, now and then, when opportunity offers, smuggling things ashore from many of the steamers coming from foreign parts. But such things, I repeat, the dredgers consider in the fair way of their business.

One of the most industrious, and I believe one of the most skilful and successful of this peculiar class, gave me the following epitome of his history.

"Father was a dredger, and grandfather afore him; grandfather was a dredger and a fisherman too. A'most as soon as I was able to crawl, father took me with him in the boat to help him to pick the coals, and bones, and other things out of the net, and to use me to the water. When I got bigger and stronger, I was sent to the parish school, but I didn't like it half as well as the boat, and couldn't be got to stay two days together. At last I went above bridge, and went along with a fisherman, and used to sleep in the boat every night. I liked to sleep in the boat; I used to be as comfortable as could be. Lor' bless you! there's a tilt to them boats, and no rain can't git at you. I used to lie awake of a night in them times, and listen to the water slapping ag'in the boat, and think it fine fun. I might a got bound 'prentice, but I got aboard a smack, where I stayed three or four year, and if I'd a stayed there, I'd a liked it much better. But I heerd as how father was ill, so I com'd home, and took to the dredging, and am at it off and on ever since. I got no larnin', how could I? There's on'y one or two of us dredgers as knows anything of larnin', and they're no better off than the rest. Larnin's no use to a dredger, he hasn't got no time to read; and if he had, why it wouldn't tell him where the holes and furrows is at the bottom of the river, and where things is to be found. To be sure there's holes and furrows at the bottom. I know a good many. I know a furrow off Lime'us Point, no wider nor the dredge, and I can go there, and when others can't git anything but stones and mud, I can git four or five bushel o' coal. You see they lay there; they get in with the set of the tide, and can't git out so easy like. Dredgers don't do so well now as they used to do. You know Pelican Stairs? well, before the Docks was built, when the ships lay there, I could go under Pelican Pier and pick up four or five shilling of a morning. What was that tho' to father? I hear him say he often made 5l. afore breakfast, and nobody ever the wiser. Them were fine times! there was a good livin' to be pick'd up on the water them days. About ten year ago, the fishermen at Lambeth, them as sarves their time 'duly and truly' thought to put us off the water, and went afore the Lord Mayor, but they couldn't do nothink after all. They do better nor us, as they go



fishin' all the summer, when the dredgin' is bad, and come back in winter. Some on us down here" [Rotherhithe] "go a deal-portering in the summer, or unloading 'tatoes, or anything else we can get; when we have nothin' else to do, we go on the river. Father don't dredge now, he's too old for that; it takes a man to be strong to dredge, so father goes to ship scrapin'. He on'y sits on a plank outside the ship, and scrapes off the old tar with a scraper. We does very well for all that—why he can make his half a bull a day [2s. 6d.] when he gits work, but that's not always; howsomever I helps the old man at times, when I'm able. I've found a good many bodies. I got a many rewards, and a tidy bit of inquest money. There's 5s. 6d. inquest money at Rotherhithe, and on'y a shillin' at Deptford; I can't make out how that is, but that's all they give, I know. I never finds anythink on the bodies. Lor bless you! people don't have anythink in their pockets when they gits drowned, they are not such fools as all that. Do you see them two marks there on the back of my hand? Well, one day—I was on'y young then—I was grabblin' for old rope in Church Hole, when I brings up a body, and just as I was fixing the rope on his leg to tow him ashore, two swells comes down in a skiff, and lays hold of the painter of my boat, and tows me ashore. The hook of the drag went right thro' the trowsers of the drowned man and my hand, and I couldn't let go no how, and tho' I roared out like mad, the swells didn't care, but dragged me into the stairs. When I got there, my arm, and the corpse's shoe and trowsers, was all kivered with my blood. What do you think the gents said?—why, they told me as how they had done me good, in towin' the body in, and ran away up the stairs. Tho' times ain't near so good as they was, I manages purty tidy, and hasn't got no occasion to hollar much; but there's some of the dredgers as would hollar, if they was ever so well off."

#### OF THE SEWER-HUNTERS.

SOME few years ago, the main sewers, having their outlets on the river side, were completely open, so that any person desirous of exploring their dark and uninviting recesses might enter at the river side, and wander away, provided he could withstand the combination of villanous stenches which met him at every step, for many miles, in any direction. At that time it was a thing of very frequent occurrence, especially at the spring tides, for the water to rush into the sewers, pouring through them like a torrent, and then to burst up through the gratings into the streets, flooding all the low-lying districts in the vicinity of the river, till the streets of Shadwell and Wapping resembled a Dutch town, intersected by a series of muddy canals. Of late, however, to remedy this defect, the Commissioners have had a strong brick wall built within the entrance to the several sewers. In each of these brick walls there is an opening covered by a strong iron door, which bangs from the top and is so arranged that when the tide is low the rush

of the water and other filth on the inner side, forces it back and allows the contents of the sewer to pass into the river, whilst when the tide rises the door is forced so close against the wall by the pressure of the water outside that none can by any possibility enter, and thus the river neighbourhoods are secured from the deluges which were heretofore of such frequent occurrence.

Were it not a notorious fact, it might perhaps be thought impossible, that men could be found who, for the chance of obtaining a living of some sort or other, would, day after day, and year after year, continue to travel through these underground channels for the offscouring of the city; but such is the case even at the present moment. In former times, however, this custom prevailed much more than now, for in those days the sewers were entirely open and presented no obstacle to any one desirous of entering them. Many wondrous tales are still told among the people of men having lost their way in the sewers, and of having wandered among the filthy passages—their lights extinguished by the noisome vapours—till, faint and overpowered, they dropped down and died on the spot. Other stories are told of sewer-hunters beset by myriads of enormous rats, and slaying thousands of them in their struggle for life, till at length the swarms of the savage things overpowered them, and in a few days afterwards their skeletons were discovered picked to the very bones. Since the iron doors, however, have been placed on the main sewers a prohibition has been issued against entering them, and a reward of 5l. offered to any person giving information so as to lead to the conviction of any offender. Nevertheless many still travel through these foul labyrinths, in search of such valuables as may have found their way down the drains.

The persons who are in the habit of searching the sewers, call themselves "shore-men" or "shore-workers." They belong, in a certain degree, to the same class as the "mud-larks," that is to say, they travel through the mud along shore in the neighbourhood of ship-building and ship-breaking yards, for the purpose of picking up copper nails, bolts, iron, and old rope. The shore-men, however, do not collect the lumps of coal and wood they meet with on their way, but leave them as the proper perquisites of the mud-larks. The sewer-hunters were formerly, and indeed are still, called by the name of "Toshers," the articles which they pick up in the course of their wanderings along shore being known among themselves by the general term "tosh," a word more particularly applied by them to anything made of copper. These "Toshers" may be seen, especially on the Surrey side of the Thames, habited in long greasy velveteen coats, furnished with pockets of vast capacity, and their nether limbs encased in dirty canvas trowsers, and any old slops of shoes, that may be fit only for wading through the mud. They carry a bag on their back, and in their hand a pole seven or eight feet long, on one end of which there is a large iron hoe. The uses of this instrument are various; with it they try the ground wherever it appears unsafe, before venturing on it, and, when

assured of its safety, walk forward steadying their footsteps with the staff. Should they, as often happens, even to the most experienced, sink in some quagmire, they immediately throw out the long pole armed with the hoe, which is always held uppermost for this purpose, and with it seizing hold of any object within their reach, are thereby enabled to draw themselves out; without the pole, however, their danger would be greater, for the more they struggled to extricate themselves from such places, the deeper they would sink; and even with it, they might perish, I am told, in some part, if there were nobody at hand to render them assistance. Finally, they make use of this pole to rake about the mud when searching for iron, copper, rope, and bones. They mostly exhibit great skill in discovering these things in unlikely places, and have a knowledge of the various sets of the tide, calculated to carry articles to particular points, almost equal to the dredgermen themselves. Although they cannot "pick up" as much now as they formerly did, they are still able to make what they call a fair living, and can afford to look down with a species of aristocratic contempt on the puny efforts of their less fortunate brethren the "mudlarks."

To enter the sewers and explore them to any considerable distance is considered, even by those acquainted with what is termed "working the shores," an adventure of no small risk. There are a variety of perils to be encountered in such places. The brick-work in many parts—especially in the old sewers—has become rotten through the continual action of the putrefying matter and moisture, and parts have fallen down and choked up the passage with heaps of rubbish; over these obstructions, nevertheless, the sewer-hunters have to scramble "in the best way they can." In such parts they are careful not to touch the brick-work over head, for the slightest tap might bring down an avalanche of old bricks and earth, and severely injure them, if not bury them in the rubbish. Since the construction of the new sewers, the old ones are in general abandoned by the "hunters;" but in many places the former channels cross and re-cross those recently constructed, and in the old sewers a person is very likely to lose his way. It is dangerous to venture far into any of the smaller sewers branching off from the main, for in this the "hunters" have to stoop low down in order to proceed; and, from the confined space, there are often accumulated in such places, large quantities of foul air, which, as one of them stated, will "cause instantaneous death." Moreover, far from there being any romance in the tales told of the rats, these vermin are really numerous and formidable in the sewers, and have been known, I am assured, to attack men when alone, and even sometimes when accompanied by others, with such fury that the people have escaped from them with difficulty. They are particularly ferocious and dangerous, if they be driven into some corner whence they cannot escape, when they will immediately fly at any one that opposes their progress. I received a similar account to this from one of the London flushermen. There

are moreover, in some quarters, ditches or trenches which are filled as the water rushes up the sewers with the tide; in these ditches the water is retained by a sluice, which is shut down at high tide, and lifted again at low tide, when it rushes down the sewers with all the violence of a mountain torrent, sweeping everything before it. If the sewer-hunter be not close to some branch sewer, so that he can run into it, whenever the opening of these sluices takes place, he must inevitably perish. The trenches or water reservoirs for the cleansing of the sewers are chiefly on the south side of the river, and, as a proof of the great danger to which the sewer-hunters are exposed in such cases, it may be stated, that not very long ago, a sewer on the south side of the Thames was opened to be repaired; a long ladder reached to the bottom of the sewer, down which the bricklayer's labourer was going with a hod of bricks, when the rush of water from the sluice, struck the bottom of the ladder, and instantly swept away ladder, labourer, and all. The bricklayer fortunately was enjoying his "pint and pipe" at a neighbouring public-house. The labourer was found by my informant, a "shore-worker," near the mouth of the sewer quite dead, battered, and disfigured in a frightful manner. There was likewise great danger in former times from the rising of the tide in the sewers, so that it was necessary for the shore-men to have quitted them before the water had got any height within the entrance. At present, however, this is obviated in those sewers where the main is furnished with an iron door towards the river.

The shore-workers, when about to enter the sewers, provide themselves, in addition to the long hoe already described, with a canvas apron, which they tie round them, and a dark lantern similar to a policeman's; this they strap before them on their right breast, in such a manner that on removing the shade, the bull's-eye throws the light straight forward when they are in an erect position, and enables them to see everything in advance of them for some distance; but when they stoop, it throws the light directly under them, so that they can then distinctly see any object at their feet. The sewer-hunters usually go in gangs of three or four for the sake of company, and in order that they may be the better able to defend themselves from the rats. The old hands, who have been often up (and every gang endeavours to include at least one experienced person), travel a long distance, not only through the main sewers, but also through many of the branches. Whenever the shore-men come near a street grating, they close their lanterns and watch their opportunity of gliding silently past unobserved, for otherwise a crowd might collect over head and intimate to the policeman on duty, that there were persons wandering in the sewers below. The shore-workers never take dogs with them, lest their barking when hunting the rats might excite attention. As the men go along they search the bottom of the sewer, raking away the mud with their hoe, and pick, from between the crevices of the brick-work, money, or anything else that may have lodged there. There

are in many parts of the sewers holes where the brick-work has been worn away, and in these holes clusters of articles are found, which have been washed into them from time to time, and perhaps been collecting there for years; such as pieces of iron, nails, various scraps of metal, coins of every description, all rusted into a mass like a rock, and weighing from a half hundred to two hundred weight altogether. These "conglomerates" of metal are too heavy for the men to take out of the sewers, so that if unable to break them up, they are compelled to leave them behind; and there are very many such masses, I am informed, lying in the sewers at this moment, of immense weight, and growing larger every day by continual additions. The shore-men find great quantities of money—of copper money especially; sometimes they dive their arm down to the elbow in the mud and filth and bring up shillings, sixpences, half-crowns, and occasionally half-sovereigns and sovereigns. They always find the coins standing edge uppermost between the bricks in the bottom, where the mortar has been worn away. The sewer-hunters occasionally find plate, such as spoons, ladles, silver-handled knives and forks, mugs and drinking cups, and now and then articles of jewellery; but even while thus "in luck" as they call it, they do not omit to fill the bags on their backs with the more cumbrous articles they meet with—such as metals of every description, rope and bones. There is always a great quantity of these things to be met with in the sewers, they being continually washed down from the cesspools and drains of the houses. When the sewer-hunters consider they have searched long enough, or when they have found as much as they can conveniently take away, the gang leave the sewers and, adjourning to the nearest of their homes, count out the money they have picked up, and proceed to dispose of the old metal, bones, rope, &c.; this done, they then, as they term it, "whack" the whole lot; that is, they divide it equally among all hands. At these divisions, I am assured, it frequently occurs that each member of the gang will realise from 30s. to 2l.—this at least was a frequent occurrence some few years ago. Of late, however, the shore-men are obliged to use far more caution, as the police, and especially those connected with the river, who are more on the alert, as well as many of the coal-merchants in the neighbourhood of the sewers, would give information if they saw any suspicious persons approaching them.

The principal localities in which the shore-hunters reside are in Mint-square, Mint-street, and Kent-street, in the Borough—Snow's-fields, Bermondsey—and that never-failing locality between the London Docks and Rosemary-lane which appears to be a concentration of all the misery of the kingdom. There were known to be a few years ago nearly 200 sewer-hunters, or "toshers," and, incredible as it may appear, I have satisfied myself that, taking one week with another, they could not be said to make much short of 2l. per week. Their probable gains, I was told, were about 6s. per day all the year round. At this rate the property recovered from

the sewers of London would have amounted to no less than 20,000l. per annum, which would make the amount of property lost down the drains of each house amount to 1s. 4d. a year. The shore-hunters of the present day greatly complain of the recent restrictions, and inveigh in no measured terms against the constituted authorities. "They won't let us in to work the shores," say they, "'cause there's a little danger. They fears as how we'll get suffocated, at least they tells us so; but they don't care if we get starved! no, they doesn't mind nothink about that."

It is, however, more than suspected that these men find plenty of means to evade the vigilance of the sewer officials, and continue quietly to reap a considerable harvest, gathered whence it might otherwise have rotted in obscurity.

The sewer-hunters, strange as it may appear, are certainly smart fellows, and take decided precedence of all the other "finders" of London, whether by land or water, both on account of the greater amount of their earnings, and the skill and courage they manifest in the pursuit of their dangerous employment. But like all who make a living as it were by a game of chance, plodding, carefulness, and saving habits cannot be reckoned among their virtues; they are improvident, even to a proverb. With their gains, superior even to those of the better-paid artisans, and far beyond the amount received by many clerks, who have to maintain a "respectable appearance," the shore-men might, with but ordinary prudence, live well, have comfortable homes, and even be able to save sufficient to provide for themselves in their old age. Their practice, however, is directly the reverse. They no sooner make a "haul," as they say, than they adjourn to some low public-house in the neighbourhood, and seldom leave till empty pockets and hungry stomachs drive them forth to procure the means for a fresh debauch. It is principally on this account that, despite their large gains, they are to be found located in the most wretched quarter of the metropolis.

It might be supposed that the sewer-hunters (passing much of their time in the midst of the noisome vapours generated by the sewers, the odour of which, escaping upwards from the gratings in the streets, is dreaded and shunned by all as something pestilential) would exhibit in their pallid faces the unmistakable evidence of their unhealthy employment. But this is far from the fact. Strange to say, the sewer-hunters are strong, robust, and healthy men, generally florid in their complexion, while many of them know illness only by name. Some of the elder men, who head the gangs when exploring the sewers, are between 60 and 80 years of age, and have followed the employment during their whole lives. The men appear to have a fixed belief that the odour of the sewers contributes in a variety of ways to their general health; nevertheless, they admit that accidents occasionally occur from the air in some places being fully impregnated with mephitic gas.

I found one of these men, from whom I derived

much information, and who is really an active intelligent man, in a court off Rosemary-lane. Access is gained to this court through a dark narrow entrance, scarcely wider than a doorway, running beneath the first floor of one of the houses in the adjoining street. The court itself is about 50 yards long, and not more than three yards wide, surrounded by lofty wooden houses, with jutting abutments in many of the upper stories that almost exclude the light, and give them the appearance of being about to tumble down upon the heads of the intruders. This court is densely inhabited; every room has its own family, more or less in number; and in many of them, I am assured, there are two families residing, the better to enable the one to whom the room is let to pay the rent. At the time of my visit, which was in the evening, after the inmates had returned from their various employments, some quarrel had arisen among them. The court was so thronged with the friends of the contending individuals and spectators of the fight that I was obliged to stand at the entrance, unable to force my way through the dense multitude, while labourers and street-folk with shaggy heads, and women with dirty caps and fuzzy hair, thronged every window above, and peered down anxiously at the affray. There must have been some hundreds of people collected there, and yet all were inhabitants of this very court, for the noise of the quarrel had not yet reached the street. On wondering at the number, my informant, when the noise had ceased, explained the matter as follows: "You see, sir, there's more than 30 houses in this here court, and there's not less than eight rooms in every house; now there's nine or ten people in some of the rooms, I knows, but just say four in every room, and calculate what that there comes to." I did, and found it, to my surprise, to be 960. "Well," continued my informant, chuckling and rubbing his hands in evident delight at the result, "you may as well just tack a couple a hundred on to the tail o' them for make-weight, as we're not werry pertikler about a hundred or two one way or the other in these here places."

In this court, up three flights of narrow stairs that creaked and trembled at every footstep, and in an ill-furnished garret, dwelt the shore-worker—a man who, had he been careful, according to his own account at least, might have money in the bank and be the proprietor of the house in which he lived. The sewer-hunters, like the street-people, are all known by some peculiar nickname, derived chiefly from some personal characteristic. It would be a waste of time to inquire for them by their right names, even if you were acquainted with them, for none else would know them, and no intelligence concerning them could be obtained; while under the title of Lanky Bill, Long Tom, One-eyed George, Short-armed Jack, they are known to every one.

My informant, who is also dignified with a title, or as he calls it a "handle to his name," gave me the following account of himself: "I was born in Birmingham, but afore I recollects anythink, we

came to London. The first thing I remembers is being down on the shore at Cuckold's P'int, when the tide was out and up to my knees in mud, and a gitting down deeper and deeper every minute till I was picked up by one of the shore-workers. I used to git down there every day, to look at the ships and boats a sailing up and down; I'd niver be tired a looking at them at that time. At last father 'prenticed me to a blacksmith in Bermondsey, and then I couldn't git down to the river when I liked, so I got to hate the forge and the fire, and blowing the bellows, and couldn't stand the confinement no how,—at last I cuts and runs. After some time they gits me back ag'in, but I cuts ag'in. I was determined not to stand it. I wouldn't go home for fear I'd be sent back, so I goes down to Cuckold's P'int and there I sits near half the day, when who should I see but the old un as had picked me up out of the mud when I was a sinking. I tells him all about it, and he takes me home along with hisself, and gits me a bag and an o, and takes me out next day, and shows me what to do, and shows me the dangerous places, and the places what are safe, and how to rake in the mud for rope, and bones, and iron, and that's the way I come to be a shore-worker. Lor' bless you, I've worked Cuckold's P'int for more nor twenty year. I know places where you'd go over head and ears in the mud, and jist alongside on 'em you may walk as safe as you can on this floor. But it don't do for a stranger to try it, he'd very soon git in, and it's not so easy to git out agin, I can tell you. I stay'd with the old un a long time, and we used to git lots o' tin, specially when we'd go to work the sewers. I liked that well enough. I could git into small places where the old un couldn't, and when I'd got near the grating in the street, I'd search about in the bottom of the sewer; I'd put down my arm to my shoulder in the mud and bring up shillings and half-crowns, and lots of coppers, and plenty other things. I once found a silver jug as big as a quart pot, and often found spoons and knives and forks and every thing you can think of. Bless your heart the smells nothink; it's a roughish smell at first, but nothink near so bad as you thinks, 'cause, you see, there's sich lots o' water always a coming down the sewer, and the air gits in from the gratings, and that helps to sweeten it a bit. There's some places, specially in the old sewers, where they say there's foul air, and they tells me the foul air 'ill cause instantious death, but I niver met with anythink of the kind, and I think if there was sich a thing I should know somethink about it, for I've worked the sewers, off and on, for twenty year. When we comes to a narrow-place as we don't know, we takes the candle out of the lantern and fastens it on the hend of the o, and then runs it up the sewer, and if the light stays in, we knows as there a'n't no danger. We used to go up the city sewer at Blackfriars-bridge, but that's stopped up now; it's boarded across inside. The city wouldn't let us up if they knew it, 'cause of the danger, they say, but they don't care if we hav'n't got nothink to eat nor a place to put our heads in, while there's plenty of money

lying there and good for nobody. If you was caught up it and brought afore the Lord Mayor, he'd give you fourteen days on it, as safe as the bellows, so a good many on us now is afraid to venture in. We don't venture as we used to, but still it's done at times. There's a many places as I knows on where the bricks has fallen down, and that there's dangerous; it's so delaberated that if you touches it with your head or with the hend of the o, it'll all come down atop o' you. I've often seed as many as a hundred rats at once, and they're woppers in the sewers, I can tell you; them there water rats, too, is far more ferociouser than any other rats, and they'd think nothink of tackling a man, if they found they couldn't get away no how, but if they can why they runs by and gits out o' the road. I knows a chap as the rats tackled in the sewers; they bit him hawfully: you must ha' heard on it; it was him as the watermen went in arter when they heard him a shouting as they was a rowin' by. Only for the watermen the rats would ha' done for him, safe enough. Do you recollect hearing on the man as was found in the sewers about twelve year ago?—oh you must—the rats eat every bit of him, and left nothink but his bones. I knowed him well, he was a rig'lar shore-worker.

"The rats is very dangerous, that's sartain, but we always goes three or four on us together, and the varmint's too wide awake to tackle us then, for they know they'd git off second best. You can go a long way in the sewers if you like; I don't know how far. I niver was at the end on them myself, for a cove can't stop in longer than six or seven hour, 'cause of the tide; you must be out before that's up. There's a many branches on ivery side, but we don't go into all; we go where we know, and where we're always sure to find somethink. I know a place now where there's more than two or three hundred weight of metal all rusted together, and plenty of money among it too; but it's too heavy to carry it out, so it'll stop there I s'pose till the world comes to an end. I often brought out a piece of metal half a hundred in weight, and took it under the harch of the bridge, and broke it up with a large stone to pick out the money. I've found sovereigns and half sovereigns over and over ag'in, and three on us has often cleared a couple of pound apiece in one day out of the sewers. But we no sooner got the money than the publican had it. I only wish I'd back all the money I've guv to the publican, and I wouldn't care how the wind blew for the rest of my life. I never thought about taking a hammer along with me into the sewer, no; I never thought I'd want it. You can't go in every day, the tides don't answer, and they're so pertikler now, far more pertikler than formerly; if you was known to touch the traps, you'd git hauled up afore the beak. It's done for all that, and though there is so many eyes about. The "Johnnys" on the water are always on the look out, and if they sees any on us about, we has to cut our luck. We shore-workers sometimes does very well other ways. When we hears of a fire anywheres, we

goes and watches where they shoots the rubbish, and then we goes and sifts it over, and washes it afterwards, then all the metal sinks to the bottom. The way we does it is this here: we takes a barrel cut in half, and fills it with water, and then we shovels in the siftings, and stirs 'em round and round and round with a stick; then we throws out that water and puts in some fresh, and stirs that there round ag'in; arter some time the water gets clear, and every thing heavy's fell to the bottom, and then we sees what it is and picks it out. I've made from a pound to thirty shilling a day, at that there work on lead alone. The time the Parliament Houses was burnt, the rubbish was shot in Hyde Park, and Long J—and I goes to work it, and while we were at it, we didn't make less nor three pounds apiece a day; we found sovereigns and half sovereigns, and lots of silver half melted away, and jewellery, such as rings, and stones, and brooches; but we never got half paid for them. I found two sets of bracelets for a lady's arms, and took 'em to a jeweller, and he tried them jist where the "great" heat had melted the catch away, and found they was only metal double plated, or else he said as how he'd give us thirty pounds for them; howsomever, we takes them down to a Jew in Petticoat-lane, who used to buy things of us, and he gives us 7*l.* 10*s.* for 'em. We found so many things, that at last Long J—and I got to quarrel about the "whacking;" there was cheatin' a goin' on; it wasn't all fair and above board as it ought to be, so we gits to fightin', and kicks up sich a jolly row, that they wouldn't let us work no more, and takes and buries the whole on the rubbish. There's plenty o' things under the ground along with it now, if anybody could git at them. There was jist two loads o' rubbish shot at one time in Bishop Bonner's-fields, which I worked by myself, and what do you think I made out of that there?—why I made 3*l.* 5*s.* The rubbish was got out of a cellar, what hadn't been stirred for fifty year or more, so I thinks there ought to be somethink in it, and I keeps my eye on it, and watches where it's shot; then I turns to work, and the first thing I gits hold on is a chain, which I takes to be copper; it was so dirty, but it turned out to be all solid goold, and I gets 1*l.* 5*s.* for it from the Jew; arter that I finds lots o' coppers, and silver money, and many things besides. *The reason I likes this sort of life is, 'cause I can sit down when I likes, and nobody can't order me about. When I'm hard up, I knows as how I must work, and then I goes at it like sticks a breaking; and tho' the times isn't as they was, I can go now and pick up my four or five bob a day, where another wouldn't know how to get a brass farden.*"

There is a strange tale in existence among the shore-workers, of a race of wild hogs inhabiting the sewers in the neighbourhood of Hampstead. The story runs, that a sow in young, by some accident got down the sewer through an opening, and wandering away from the spot, littered and reared her offspring in the drain, feeding on the offal and garbage washed into it continually. Here, it is alleged, the breed multiplied exceedingly, and

have become almost as ferocious as they are numerous. This story, apocryphal as it seems, has nevertheless its believers, and it is ingeniously argued, that the reason why none of the subterranean animals have been able to make their way to the light of day is, that they could only do so by reaching the mouth of the sewer at the river-side, while, in order to arrive at that point, they must necessarily encounter the Fleet ditch, which runs towards the river with great rapidity, and as it is the obstinate nature of a pig to swim *against* the stream, the wild hogs of the sewers invariably work their way back to their original quarters, and are thus never to be seen. What seems strange in the matter is, that the inhabitants of Hampstead never have been known to see any of these animals pass beneath the gratings, nor to have been disturbed by their gruntings. The reader of course can believe as much of the story as he pleases, and it is right to inform him that the sewer-hunters themselves have never yet encountered any of the fabulous monsters of the Hampstead sewers.

#### OF THE MUD-LARKS.

THERE is another class who may be termed river-finders, although their occupation is connected only with the shore; they are commonly known by the name of "mud-larks," from being compelled, in order to obtain the articles they seek, to wade sometimes up to their middle through the mud left on the shore by the retiring tide. These poor creatures are certainly about the most deplorable in their appearance of any I have met with in the course of my inquiries. They may be seen of all ages, from mere childhood to positive decrepitude, crawling among the barges at the various wharfs along the river; it cannot be said that they are clad in rags, for they are scarcely half covered by the tattered indescribable things that serve them for clothing; their bodies are grimed with the foul soil of the river, and their torn garments stiffened up like boards with dirt of every possible description.

Among the mud-larks may be seen many old women, and it is indeed pitiable to behold them, especially during the winter, bent nearly double with age and infirmity, paddling and groping among the wet mud for small pieces of coal, chips of wood, or any sort of refuse washed up by the tide. These women always have with them an old basket or an old tin kettle, in which they put whatever they chance to find. It usually takes them a whole tide to fill this receptacle, but when filled, it is as much as the feeble old creatures are able to carry home.

The mud-larks generally live in some court or alley in the neighbourhood of the river, and, as the tide recedes, crowds of boys and little girls, some old men, and many old women, may be observed loitering about the various stairs, watching eagerly for the opportunity to commence their labours. When the tide is sufficiently low they scatter themselves along the shore, separating from each other, and soon disappear among the craft lying about in every direc-

tion. This is the case on both sides of the river, as high up as there is anything to be found, extending as far as Vauxhall-bridge, and as low down as Woolwich. The mud-larks themselves, however, know only those who reside near them, and whom they are accustomed to meet in their daily pursuits; indeed, with but few exceptions, these people are dull, and apparently stupid; this is observable particularly among the boys and girls, who, when engaged in searching the mud, hold but little converse one with another. The men and women may be passed and repassed, but they notice no one; they never speak, but with a stolid look of wretchedness they plash their way through the mire, their bodies bent down while they peer anxiously about, and occasionally stoop to pick up some paltry treasure that falls in their way.

The mud-larks collect whatever they happen to find, such as coals, bits of old-iron, rope, bones, and copper nails that drop from ships while lying or repairing along shore. Copper nails are the most valuable of all the articles they find, but these they seldom obtain, as they are always driven from the neighbourhood of a ship while being new-sheathed. Sometimes the younger and bolder mud-larks venture on sweeping some empty coal-barge, and one little fellow with whom I spoke, having been lately caught in the act of so doing, had to undergo for the offence seven days' imprisonment in the House of Correction: this, he says, he liked much better than mud-larking, for while he staid there he wore a coat and shoes and stockings, and though he had not over much to eat, he certainly was never afraid of going to bed without anything at all—as he often had to do when at liberty. He thought he would try it on again in the winter, he told me, saying, it would be so comfortable to have clothes and shoes and stockings then, and not be obliged to go into the cold wet mud of a morning.

The coals that the mud-larks find, they sell to the poor people of the neighbourhood at 1*d.* per pot, holding about 14 lbs. The iron and bones and rope and copper nails which they collect, they sell at the rag-shops. They dispose of the iron at 5 lbs. for 1*d.*, the bones at 3 lbs. a 1*d.*, rope a 1/2*d.* per lb. wet, and 3/4*d.* per lb. dry, and copper nails at the rate of 4*d.* per lb. They occasionally pick up tools, such as saws and hammers; these they dispose of to the seamen for biscuit and meat, and sometimes sell them at the rag-shops for a few halfpence. In this manner they earn from 2 1/2*d.* to 3*d.* per day, but rarely the latter sum; their average gains may be estimated at about 3*d.* per day. The boys, after leaving the river, sometimes scrape their trousers, and frequent the cab-stands, and try to earn a trifle by opening the cab-doors for those who enter them, or by holding gentlemen's horses. Some of them go, in the evening, to a ragged school, in the neighbourhood of which they live; more, as they say, because other boys go there, than from any desire to learn.

At one of the stairs in the neighbourhood of the pool, I collected about a dozen of these unfortunate children; there was not one of them

over twelve years of age, and many of them were but six. It would be almost impossible to describe the wretched group, so motley was their appearance, so extraordinary their dress, and so stolid and inexpressive their countenances. Some carried baskets, filled with the produce of their morning's work, and others old tin kettles with iron handles. Some, for want of these articles, had old hats filled with the bones and coals they had picked up; and others, more needy still, had actually taken the caps from their own heads, and filled them with what they had happened to find. The muddy slush was dripping from their clothes and utensils, and forming a puddle in which they stood. There did not appear to be among the whole group as many filthy cotton rags to their backs as, when stitched together, would have been sufficient to form the material of one shirt. There were the remnants of one or two jackets among them, but so begrimed and tattered that it would have been difficult to have determined either the original material or make of the garment. On questioning one, he said his father was a coal-backer; he had been dead eight years; the boy was nine years old. His mother was alive; she went out charing and washing when she could get any such work to do. She had 1s. a day when she could get employment, but that was not often; he remembered once to have had a pair of shoes, but it was a long time since. "It is very cold in winter," he said, "to stand in the mud without shoes," but he did not mind it in summer. He had been three years mud-larking, and supposed he should remain a mud-lark all his life. What else could he be? for there was nothing else that he knew how to do. Some days he earned 1d., and some days 4d.; he never earned 8d. in one day, that would have been a "jolly lot of money." He never found a saw or a hammer, he "only wished" he could, they would be glad to get hold of them at the dolly's. He had been one month at school before he went mud-larking. Some time ago he had gone to the ragged-school; but he no longer went there, for he forgot it. He could neither read nor write, and did not think he could learn if he tried "ever so much." He didn't know what religion his father and mother were, nor did he know what religion meant. God was God, he said. He had heard he was good, but didn't know what good he was to him. He thought he was a Christian, but he didn't know what a Christian was. He had heard of Jesus Christ once, when he went to a Catholic chapel, but he never heard tell of who or what he was, and didn't "particular care" about knowing. His father and mother were born in Aberdeen, but he didn't know where Aberdeen was. London was England, and England, he said, was in London, but he couldn't tell in what part. He could not tell where he would go to when he died, and didn't believe any one could tell that. Prayers, he told me, were what people said to themselves at night. He never said any, and didn't know any; his mother sometimes used to speak to him about them, but he could never learn any. His mother didn't go to church or to chapel, because she had

no clothes. All the money he got he gave to his mother, and she bought bread with it, and when they had no money they lived the best way they could.

Such was the amount of intelligence manifested by this unfortunate child.

Another was only seven years old. He stated that his father was a sailor who had been hurt on board ship, and been unable to go to sea for the last two years. He had two brothers and a sister, one of them older than himself; and his elder brother was a mud-lark like himself. The two had been mud-larking more than a year; they went because they saw other boys go, and knew that they got money for the things they found. They were often hungry, and glad to do anything to get something to eat. Their father was not able to earn anything, and their mother could get but little to do. They gave all the money they earned to their mother. They didn't gamble, and play at pitch and toss when they had got some money, but some of the big boys did on the Sunday, when they didn't go a mud-larking. He couldn't tell why they did nothing on a Sunday, "only they didn't;" though sometimes they looked about to see where the best place would be on the next day. He didn't go to the ragged school; he should like to know how to read a book, though he couldn't tell what good it would do him. He didn't like mud larking, would be glad of something else, but didn't know anything else that he could do.

Another of the boys was the son of a dock labourer,—casually employed. He was between seven and eight years of age, and his sister, who was also a mud-lark, formed one of the group. The mother of these two was dead, and there were three children younger than themselves.

The rest of the histories may easily be imagined, for there was a painful uniformity in the stories of all the children: they were either the children of the very poor, who, by their own improvidence or some overwhelming calamity, had been reduced to the extremity of distress, or else they were orphans, and compelled from utter destitution to seek for the means of appeasing their hunger in the mud of the river. That the majority of this class are ignorant, and without even the rudiments of education, and that many of them from time to time are committed to prison for petty thefts, cannot be wondered at. Nor can it even excite our astonishment that, once within the walls of a prison, and finding how much more comfortable it is than their previous condition, they should return to it repeatedly. As for the females growing up under such circumstances, the worst may be anticipated of them; and in proof of this I have found, upon inquiry, that very many of the unfortunate creatures who swell the tide of prostitution in Ratcliff-highway, and other low neighbourhoods in the East of London, have originally been mud-larks; and only remained at that occupation till such time as they were capable of adopting the more easy and more lucrative life of the prostitute.

As to the numbers and earnings of the mud-

larks, the following calculations fall short of, rather than exceed, the truth. From Execution Dock to the lower part of Limehouse Hole, there are 14 stairs or landing-places, by which the mud-larks descend to the shore in order to pursue their employment. There are about as many on the opposite side of the water similarly frequented.

At King James' Stairs, in Wapping Wall, which is nearly a central position, from 40 to 50 mud-larks go down daily to the river; the mud-larks "using" the other stairs are not so numerous. If, therefore, we reckon the number of stairs on both sides of the river at 28, and the average number of mud-larks frequenting them at 10 each, we shall have a total of 280. Each mud-lark, it has been shown, earns on an average 3d. a day, or 1s. 6d. per week; so that the annual earnings of each will be 3l. 18s., or say 4l., a year, and hence the gross earnings of the 280 will amount to rather more than 1000l. per annum.

But there are, in addition to the mud-larks employed in the neighbourhood of what may be called the pool, many others who work down the river at various places as far as Blackwall, on the one side, and at Deptford, Greenwich, and Woolwich, on the other. These frequent the neighbourhoods of the various "yards" along shore, where vessels are being built; and whence, at certain times, chips, small pieces of wood, bits of iron, and copper nails, are washed out into the river. There is but little doubt that this portion of the class earn much more than the mud-larks of the pool, seeing that they are especially convenient to the places where the iron vessels are constructed; so that the presumption is, that the number of mud-larks "at work" on the banks of the Thames (especially if we include those above bridge), and the value of the property extracted by them from the mud of the river, may be fairly estimated at double that which is stated above, or say 550 gaining 2000l. per annum.

As an illustration of the doctrines I have endeavoured to enforce throughout this publication, I cite the following history of one of the above class. It may serve to teach those who are still sceptical as to the degrading influence of circumstances upon the poor, that many of the humbler classes, if placed in the same easy position as ourselves, would become, perhaps, quite as "respectable" members of society.

The lad of whom I speak was discovered by me now nearly two years ago "mud-larking" on the banks of the river near the docks. He was a quick, intelligent little fellow, and had been at the business, he told me, about three years. He had taken to mud-larking, he said, because his clothes were too bad for him to look for anything better. He worked every day, with 20 or 30 boys, who might all be seen at day-break with their trowsers tucked up, groping about, and picking out the pieces of coal from the mud on the banks of the Thames. He went into the river up to his knees, and in searching the mud he often ran pieces of glass and long nails into his feet. When this was the case, he went home and dressed the wounds, but returned

to the river-side directly, "for should the tide come up," he added, "without my having found something, why I must starve till next low tide." In the very cold weather he and his other shoeless companions used to stand in the hot water that ran down the river side from some of the steam-factories, to warm their frozen feet.

At first he found it difficult to keep his footing in the mud, and he had known many beginners fall in. He came to my house, at my request, the morning after my first meeting with him. It was the depth of winter, and the poor little fellow was nearly destitute of clothing. His trousers were worn away up to his knees, he had no shirt, and his legs and feet (which were bare) were covered with chilblains. On being questioned by me he gave the following account of his life:—

He was fourteen years old. He had two sisters, one fifteen and the other twelve years of age. His father had been dead nine years. The man had been a coal-whipper, and, from getting his work from one of the publican employers in those days, had become a confirmed drunkard. When he married he held a situation in a warehouse, where his wife managed the first year to save 4l. 10s. out of her husband's earnings; but from the day he took to coal-whipping she had never saved one halfpenny, indeed she and her children were often left to starve. The man (whilst in a state of intoxication) had fallen between two barges, and the injuries he received had been so severe that he had lingered in a helpless state for three years before his death. After her husband's decease the poor woman's neighbours subscribed 1l. 5s. for her; with this sum she opened a greengrocer's shop, and got on very well for five years.

When the boy was nine years old his mother sent him to the Red Lion school at Green-bank, near Old Gravel-lane, Ratcliff-highway; she paid 1d. a week for his learning. He remained there for a year; then the potato-rot came, and his mother lost upon all she bought. About the same time two of her customers died 30s. in her debt; this loss, together with the potato-disease, completely ruined her, and the whole family had been in the greatest poverty from that period. Then she was obliged to take all her children from their school, that they might help to keep themselves as best they could. Her eldest girl sold fish in the streets, and the boy went to the river-side to "pick up" his living. The change, however, was so great that shortly afterwards the little fellow lay ill eighteen weeks with the ague. As soon as the boy recovered his mother and his two sisters were "taken bad" with a fever. The poor woman went into the "Great House," and the children were taken to the Fever Hospital. When the mother returned home she was too weak to work, and all she had to depend on was what her boy brought from the river. They had nothing to eat and no money until the little fellow had been down to the shore and picked up some coals, selling them for a trifle. "And hard enough he had to work for what he got, poor boy," said his mother to me on a future

occasion, sobbing; "still he never complained, but was quite proud when he brought home enough for us to get a bit of meat with; and when he has sometimes seen me down-hearted, he has clung round my neck, and assured me that one day God would see us cared for if I would put my trust in Him." As soon as his mother was well enough she sold fruit in the streets, or went out washing when she could get a day's work.

The lad suffered much from the pieces of broken glass in the mud. Some little time before I met with him he had run a copper nail into his foot. This lamed him for three months, and his mother was obliged to carry him on her back every morning to the doctor. As soon, however, as he could "hobble" (to use his mother's own words) he went back to the river, and often returned (after many hours' hard work in the mud) with only a few pieces of coal, not enough to sell even to get them a bit of bread. One evening, as he was warming his feet in the water that ran from a steam factory, he heard some boys talking about the Ragged School in High-street, Wapping.

"They was saying what they used to learn there," added the boy. "They asked me to come along with them for it was great fun. They told me that all the boys used to be laughing and making game of the master. They said they used to put out the gas and chuck the slates all about. They told me, too, that there was a good fire there, so I went to have a warm and see what it was like. When I got there the master was very kind to me. They used to give us tea-parties, and to keep us quiet they used to show us the magic lantern. I soon got to like going there, and went every night for six months. There was about 40 or 50 boys in the school. The most of them was thieves, and they used to go thieving the coals out of barges along shore, and cutting the ropes off ships, and going and selling it at the rag-shops. They used to get 2d. a lb. for the rope when dry, and 1d. when wet. Some used to steal pudding out of shops and hand it to those outside, and the last boy it was handed to would go off with it. They used to steal bacon and bread sometimes as well. About half of the boys at the school was thieves. Some had work to do at ironmongers, lead-factories, engineers, soap-boilers, and so on, and some had no work to do and was good boys still. After we came out of school at nine o'clock at night, some of the bad boys would go a thieving, perhaps half-a-dozen and from that to eight would go out in a gang together. There was one big boy of the name of C—; he was 18 years old, and is in prison now for stealing bacon; I think he is in the House of Correction. This C— used to go out of school before any of us, and wait outside the door as the other boys came out. Then he would call the boys he wanted for his gangs on one side, and tell them where to go and steal. He used to look out in the daytime for shops where things could be 'priggid,' and at night he would tell the boys to go to them. He was called the captain of the gangs. He had about three gangs altogether with him, and there were from six to eight boys in each

gang. The boys used to bring what they stole to C—, and he used to share it with them. I belonged to one of the gangs. There were six boys altogether in my gang; the biggest lad, that knowed all about the thieving, was the captain of the gang I was in, and C— was captain over him and over all of us.

"There was two brothers of them; you seed them, sir, the night you first met me. The other boys, as was in my gang, was B— B—, and B— L—, and W— B—, and a boy we used to call 'Tim;' these, with myself, used to make up one of the gangs, and we all of us used to go a thieving every night after school-hours. When the tide would be right up, and we had nothing to do along shore, we used to go thieving in the daytime as well. It was B— B—, and B— L—, as first put me up to go thieving; they took me with them, one night, up the lane [New Gravel-lane], and I see them take some bread out of a baker's, and they wasn't found out; and, after that, I used to go with them regular. Then I joined C—'s gang; and, after that, C— came and told us that his gang could do better than ourn, and he asked us to join our gang to his'n, and we did so. Sometimes we used to make 3s. or 4s. a day; or about 6d. apiece. While waiting outside the school-doors, before they opened, we used to plan up where we would go thieving after school was over. I was taken up once for thieving coals myself, but I was let go again."

I was so much struck with the boy's truthfulness of manner, that I asked him, *would*, he really lead a different life, if he saw a means of so doing? He assured me he would, and begged me earnestly to try him. Upon his leaving me, 2s. were given him for his trouble. This small sum (I afterwards learned) kept the family for more than a fortnight. The girl laid it out in sprats (it being then winter-time); these she sold in the streets.

I mentioned the fact to a literary friend, who interested himself in the boy's welfare; and eventually succeeded in procuring him a situation at an eminent printer's. The subjoined letter will show how the lad conducted himself while there.

"Whitefriars, April 22, 1850.  
"Messrs. Bradbury and Evans beg to say that the boy J. C. has conducted himself in a very satisfactory manner since he has been in their employment."

The same literary friend took the girl into his service. She is in a situation still, though not in the same family.

The boy now holds a good situation at one of the daily newspaper offices. So well has he behaved himself, that, a few weeks since, his wages were increased from 6s. to 9s. per week. His mother (owing to the boy's exertions) has now a little shop, and is doing well.

This simple story requires no comments, and is narrated here in the hope that it may teach many to know how often the poor boys reared in the gutter are thieves, merely because society forbids them being honest lads.

OF THE LONDON DUSTMEN, NIGHTMEN, SWEEPS, AND SCAVENGERS.

THESE men constitute a large body, and are a class who, all things considered, do their work silently and efficiently. Almost without the cognisance of the mass of the people, the refuse is removed from our streets and houses; and London, as if in the care of a tidy housewife, is *always* being cleaned. Great as are the faults and absurdities of many parts of our system of public cleansing, nevertheless, when compared with the state of things in any continental capital, the superiority of the metropolis of Great Britain is indisputable.

In all this matter there is little merit to be attributed to the workmen, except that they may be well drilled; for the majority of them are as much machines, apart from their animation, as are the cane and whalebone made to cleanse the chimney, or the clumsy-looking machine which, in its progress, is a vehicular scavenger, sweeping as it goes.

These public cleansers are to be thus classified:—

1. Dustmen, or those who empty and remove the collection of ashes, bones, vegetables, &c., deposited in the dust-bins, or other refuse receptacles throughout the metropolis.
2. Nightmen, or those who remove the contents of the cesspools.
3. Sweeps, or those who remove the soot from the chimneys.
4. Scavengers; or those who remove the dirt from the streets, roads, and markets.

Let me, however, before proceeding further with the subject, lay before the reader the following important return as to the extent and contents of this prodigious city: for this document I am indebted to the Commissioners of Police, gentlemen from whom I have derived the most valuable information since the commencement of my inquiries, and to whose courtesy and consideration I am anxious to acknowledge my many obligations.

RETURN SHOWING THE EXTENT, POPULATION, AND POLICE FORCE IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DISTRICT AND THE CITY OF LONDON IN SEPTEMBER, 1850.

	Metropolitan Police District*.			City of London †.	Grand Total.
	Inner District ‡.	Outer District.	Total.		
Area . . . . . (in square miles)	91	609½	700½	1¼	702¼
Parishes . . . . .	82	136	218	97	315
Streets, Roads, &c. (length of, in miles)	1,700	1,936	3,636	50	3,686
Number of Houses inhabited . . . . .	289,912	59,995	349,907	15,613	365,520
" " uninhabited . . . . .	11,868	1,437	13,305	387	13,692
" " being built . . . . .	4,634	1,097	5,731	23	5,754
Population . . . . .	1,986,629	350,331	2,336,960	125,000	2,461,960
Police Force . . . . .	4,844	660	5,504	568	6,072

18th September, 1850.

\* The Metropolitan Police District comprises a circle, the radius of which is 15 miles from Charing Cross; the extreme boundary on the N. includes the parish of Cheshunt and South Mimms; on the S., Epsom; on the E., Dagenham and Crayford; and on the W., Uxbridge and Staines.

† The inner district includes the parish of St. John, Hampstead, on the N.; Tooting and Streatham on the S. Ealing and Brentford on the W.; and Greenwich on the E.

‡ The Registrar General's District is equal, or nearly so, to the inner Metropolitan Police District.

§ The City of London is bounded on the S. by the River, on the E. by Whitechapel, on the W. by Chancery Lane, and N. by Finsbury.

The total here given can hardly be considered as the dimensions of the metropolis; though, where the capital begins and ends, it is difficult to say. If, however, London be regarded as concentrating within the Inner Police District, then, adding the extent and contents of that district to those of the City, as above detailed, we have the subjoined statement as to the dimensions and inhabitants of the

*Metropolis Proper.*

Area . . . . .	92¼ square miles.
Parishes . . . . .	179
Length of street, roads, &c.	1750 miles.
Number of inhabited houses . . . . .	305,525
Ditto uninhabited . . . . .	12,255
Ditto being built . . . . .	4657
Population . . . . .	2,111,629
Police force . . . . .	5412

But if the extent of even this "inner district" be so vast as almost to overpower the mind with its magnitude—if its population be greater than that of the entire kingdom of Hanover, and almost equal to that of the republic of Switzerland—if its houses be so numerous that placed side by side they would form one continuous line of dwellings from its centre to Moscow—if its streets and roads be nearly equal in length to one quarter of the diameter of the earth itself,—what a task must the cleansing of such a bricken wilderness be, and yet, assuredly, though it be by far the greatest, it is at the same time by far the cleanest city in the world.

The removal of the refuse of a large town is, perhaps, one of the most important of social operations. Not only is it necessary for the well-being of a vast aggregation of people that the

ordure should be removed from both within and around their dwellings as soon as it is generated, but nature, ever working in a circle and reproducing in the same ratio as she destroys, has made this same ordure not only the cause of present disease when allowed to remain within the city, but the means of future health and sustenance when removed to the fields.

In a leading article in the *Morning Chronicle*, written about two years since, I said—

“That man gets his bones from the rocks and his muscles from the atmosphere, is beyond all doubt. The iron in his blood and the lime in his teeth were originally in the soil. But these could not be in his body unless they had previously formed part of his food. And yet we can neither live on air nor on stones. We cannot grow fat upon lime, and iron is positively indigestible in our stomachs. It is by means of the vegetable creation alone that we are enabled to convert the mineral into flesh and blood. The only apparent use of herbs and plants is to change the inorganic earth, air, and water, into organic substances fitted for the nutrition of animals. The little lichen, which, by means of the oxalic acid that it secretes, decomposes the rocks to which it clings, and fits their lime for ‘assimilation’ with higher organisms, is, as it were, but the primitive bone-maker of the world. By what subtle transmutation inorganic nature is changed into organic, and dead inert matter quickened with life, is far beyond us even to conjecture. Suffice it that an express apparatus is required for the process—a special mechanism to convert the ‘crust of the earth,’ as it is called, into food for man and beast.

“Now, in Nature everything moves in a circle—perpetually changing, and yet ever returning to the point whence it started. Our bodies are continually decomposing and recomposing—indeed, the very process of breathing is but one of decomposition. As animals live on vegetables, even so is the refuse of the animal the vegetable’s food. The carbonic acid which comes from our lungs, and which is poison for us to inhale, is not only the vital air of plants, but positively their nutriment. With the same wondrous economy that marks all creation, it has been ordained that what is unfitted for the support of the superior organisms, is of all substances the best adapted to give strength and vigour to the inferior. That which we excrete as pollution to our system, they secrete as nourishment to theirs. Plants are not only Nature’s scavengers but Nature’s purifiers. They remove the filth from the earth, as well as disinfect the atmosphere, and fit it to be breathed by a higher order of beings. Without the vegetable creation the animal could neither have been nor be. Plants not only fitted the earth originally for the residence of man and the brute, but to this day they continue to render it habitable to us. For this end their nature has been made the very antithesis to ours. The process by which we live is the process by which they are destroyed. That which supports respiration in us produces putrefaction in them. What our lungs throw off, their lungs absorb—what our bodies reject, their roots imbibe.

“Hence, in order that the balance of waste and supply should be maintained—that the principle of universal compensation should be kept up, and that what is rejected by us should go to the sustenance of plants, Nature has given us several instinctive motives to remove our refuse from us. She has not only constituted that which we esteem the most loathsome of all things to our senses and imagination, but she has rendered its effluvia highly pernicious to our health—sulphuretted hydrogen being at once the most deleterious and offensive of all gases. Consequently, as in all other cases where the great law of Nature has to be enforced by special sanctions, a double motive has been given us to do that which it is necessary for us to do, and thus it has been made not only advantageous to us to remove our refuse to the fields, but positively detrimental to our health, and disgusting to our senses, to keep it in the neighbourhood of our houses.

“In every well-regulated State, therefore, an effective and rapid means for carrying off the ordure of the people to a locality where it may be fruitful instead of destructive, becomes a most important consideration. Both the health and the wealth of the nation depend upon it. If to make two blades of wheat grow where one grew before is to confer a benefit on the world, surely to remove that which will enable us at once to do this, and to purify the very air which we breathe, as well as the water which we drink, must be a still greater boon to society. It is, in fact, to give the community not only a double amount of food, but a double amount of health to enjoy it. We are now beginning to understand this. Up to the present time we have only thought of removing our refuse—the idea of using it never entered our minds. It was not until science taught us the dependence of one order of creation upon another, that we began to see that what appeared worse than worthless to us was Nature’s capital—*wealth set aside for future production.*”

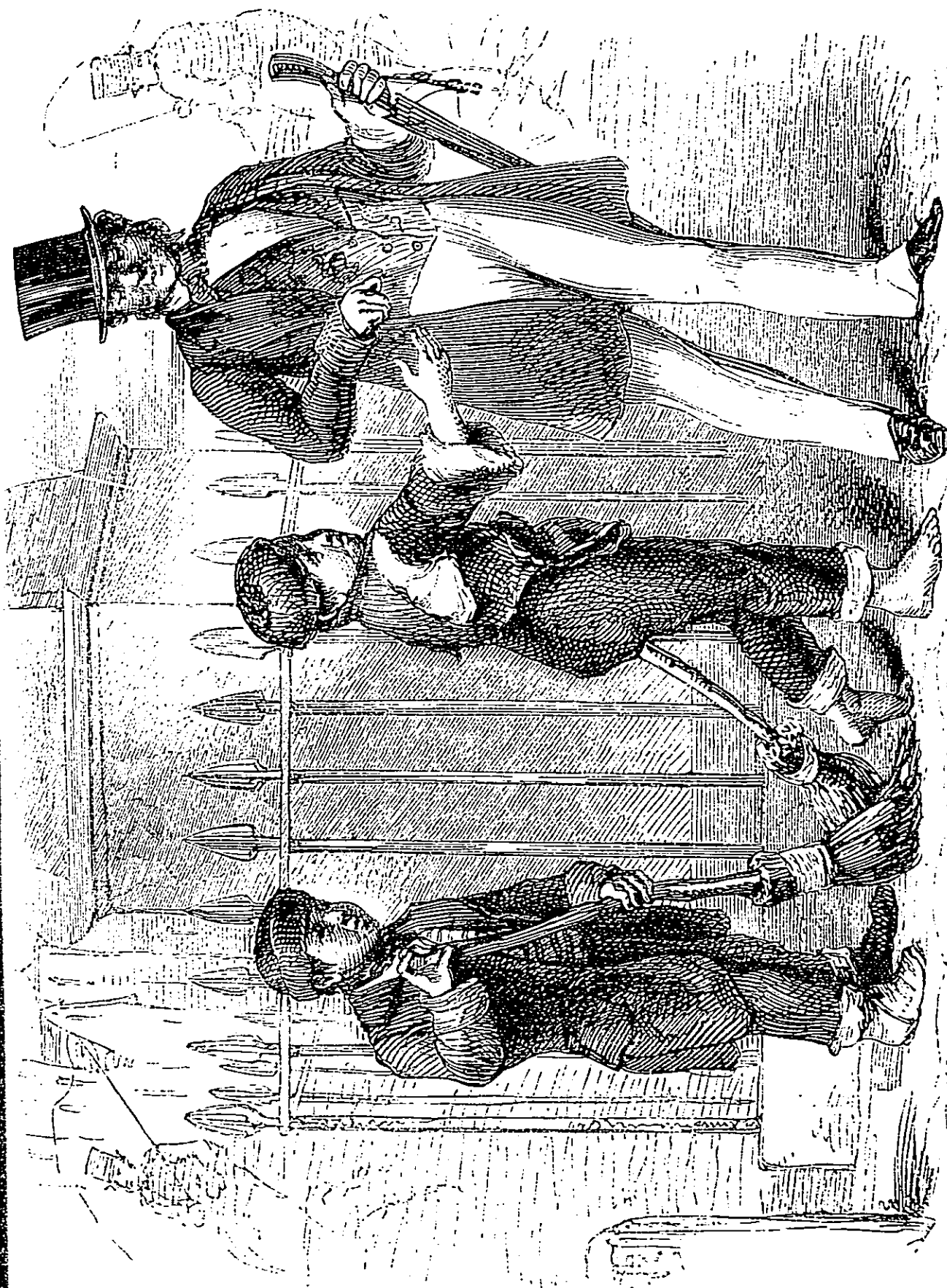
In connection with this part of the subject, viz., the use of human refuse, I would here draw attention to those erroneous notions, as to the multiplication of the people, which teach us to look upon the increase of the population beyond certain limits as the greatest possible evil that can befall a community. Population, it is said, multiplies itself in a geometrical ratio, whereas the produce of the land is increased only in arithmetical proportion; that is to say, while the people are augmented after the rate of—

2    4    8    16    32    64

the quantity of food for them can be extended only in the following degrees:—

2    4    6    8    10    12

The cause of this is said to be that, after a certain stage in the cultivation of the soil, the increase of the produce from land is not in proportion to the increase of labour devoted to it; that is to say, doubling the labour does not double the crop; and hence it is asserted that the human race increasing at a quicker rate than the food, insufficient sustenance must be the necessary lot



THE BOY CROSSING-SWEEPERS.

[From a Photograph.]

of a portion of the people in every densely-populated community.

That men of intelligence and education should have been persuaded by so plausible a doctrine at the time of its first promulgation may be readily conceived, for then the notions concerning organic chemistry were vague in the extreme, and the great universal law of Waste and Supply remained to be fully developed; but that men pretending to the least scientific knowledge should in these days be found advocating the Population Theory is only another of the many proofs of the indisposition of even the strongest minds to abandon their pet prejudices. Assuredly Malthus and Liebig are incompatible. If the new notions as to the chemistry of vegetation be true, then must the old notions as to population be utterly unfounded. If what we excrete plants secrete—if what we exhale they inspire—if our refuse is their food—then it follows that to increase the population is to increase the quantity of manure, while to increase the manure is to augment the food of plants, and consequently the plants themselves. If the plants nourish us, we at least nourish them. It seems never to have occurred to the economists that plants themselves required sustenance, and consequently they never troubled themselves to inquire whence they derived the elements of their growth. Had they done this they would never have even expected that a double quantity of mere labour upon the soil should have doubled the produce; but they would rather have seen that it was utterly impossible for the produce to be doubled without the food in the soil being doubled likewise; that is to say, they would have perceived that plants could not, whatever the labour exerted upon their cultivation, extract the elements of their organization from the earth and air, unless those elements previously existed in the land and atmosphere in which they grew, and that such elements, moreover, could not exist there without some organic being to egest them.

This doctrine of the universal Compensation extending throughout the material world, and more especially through the animal and vegetable kingdom, is, perhaps, one of the grandest and most consoling that science has yet revealed to us, making each mutually dependent on the other, and so contributing each to the other's support. Moreover it is the more comforting, as enabling us almost to demonstrate the falsity of a creed which is opposed to every generous impulse of our nature, and which is utterly irreconcilable with the attributes of the Creator.

"Thanks to organic chemistry," I said two years ago in the *Morning Chronicle*, "we are beginning to wake up. Science has taught us that the removal of the ordure of towns to the fields is a question that concerns not only our health, but, what is a far more important consideration with us, our breeches pockets. What we, in our ignorance, had mistaken for refuse of the vilest kind, we have now learned to regard as being, with reference to its fertilizing virtues, 'a precious ore, running in rich veins beneath the surface of our streets.' Whereas, if allowed to

reek and seethe in cesspools within scent of our very hearths, or to pollute the water that we use to quench our thirst and cook our food, it becomes, like all wealth badly applied, converted into 'poison:' as Romeo says of gold to the apothecary—

'Doing more murders in this loathsome world  
Than those poor compounds which thou mayst not  
sell.'

"Formerly, in our eagerness to get rid of the pollution, we had literally not looked beyond our noses: hence our only care was to carry off the nuisance from the immediate vicinity of our own residences. It was no matter to us what became of it, so long as it did not taint the atmosphere around us. This the very instincts of our nature had made objectionable to us; so we laid down just as many drains and sewers as would carry our night-soil to the nearest stream; and thus, instead of poisoning the air that we breathed, we poisoned the water that we drank. Then, as the town extended—for cities, like mosaic work, are put together piecemeal—street being dovetailed to street, like county to county in our children's geographical puzzles—each new row of houses tailed on its drains to those of its neighbours, without any inquiry being made as to whether they were on the same level or not. The consequence of this is, that the sewers in many parts of our metropolis are subject to an ebb and flood like their central stream, so that the pollution which they remove at low-water, they regularly bring back at high-water to the very doors of the houses whence they carried it.

"According to the average of the returns, from 1841 to 1846, we are paying two millions every year for guano, bone-dust, and other foreign fertilizers of our soil. In 1845, we employed no fewer than 633 ships to bring home 220,000 tons of animal manure from Ichaboe alone; and yet we are every day emptying into the Thames 115,000 tons of a substance which has been proved to be possessed of even greater fertilizing powers. With 200 tons of the sewage that we are wont to regard as refuse, applied to the irrigation of one acre of meadow land, seven crops, we are told, have been produced in the year, each of them worth from 6*l.* to 7*l.*; so that, considering the produce to have been doubled by these means, we have an increase of upwards of 200*l.* per acre per annum effected by the application of that refuse to the surface of our fields. This return is at the rate of 10*l.* for every 100 tons of sewage; and, since the total amount of refuse discharged into the Thames from the sewers of the metropolis is, in round numbers, 40,000,000 tons per annum, it follows that, according to such estimate, we are positively wasting 4,000,000*l.* of money every year; or, rather, it costs us that amount to poison the waters about us. Or, granting that the fertilizing power of the metropolitan refuse is—as it is said to be—as great for arable as for pasture-lands, then for every 200 tons of manure that we now cast away, we might have an increase of at least 20 bushels of corn per acre. Consequently the entire 40,000,000 tons of sewage, if

applied to fatten the land instead of to poison the water, would, at such a rate of increase, swell our produce to the extent of 4,000,000 bushels of wheat per annum. Calculating then that each of these bushels would yield 16 quarter loaves, it would follow that we fling into the Thames no less than 246,000,000 lbs. of bread every year; or, still worse, by pouring into the river that which, if spread upon our fields, would enable thousands to live, we convert the elements of life and health into the germs of disease and death, changing into slow but certain poisons that which, in the subtle transmutation of organic nature, would become acres of life-sustaining grain." I shall have more to say subsequently on this waste and its consequences.

These considerations show how vastly import-

RETURN OF THE NUMBER OF SWEEPS, DUSTMEN, AND NIGHTMEN IN THE METROPOLIS, ACCORDING TO THE CENSUS OF 1841.

	Total.	Males.		Females.	
		20 years and upwards.	Under 20.	20 years and upwards.	Under 20.
Chimney Sweepers . . . . .	1033	619	370	44	
Scavengers and Nightmen . . . . .	254	227	10	17	

I am informed by persons in the trade that the "females" here mentioned as chimney-sweepers, and scavengers, and nightmen, must be such widows or daughters of sweeps and nightmen as have succeeded to their businesses, for that no women work at such trades; excepting, perhaps, in the management and care of the soot, in assisting to empty and fill the bags. Many females, however, are employed in sifting dust, but the calling of the dustman and dustwoman is not so much as noticed in the population returns.

According to the occupation abstract of the previous decennial period, the number of males of 20 years and upwards (for none others were mentioned) pursuing the same callings in the metropolis in 1831, were as follows:—

Soot and chimney-sweepers . . . . . 421  
Nightmen and scavengers . . . . . 130

Hence the increase in the adult male operatives belonging to these trades, between 1831 and 1841, was, for Chimney-sweepers, 198; and Scavengers and Nightmen, 97.

But these returns are preposterously incorrect. In the first place it was not until 1842 that the parliamentary enactment prohibiting the further employment of climbing-boys for the purpose of sweeping chimneys came into operation. At that time the number of inhabited houses in the metropolis was in round numbers 250,000, and calculating these to have contained only eight rooms each, there would have been at the least 2,000,000 chimneys to sweep. Now, according to the government returns above cited—the London climbing-boys (for the masters did not and could not climb) in 1841 numbered only 370; at which rate there would have been but one boy to

ant it is that in the best of all possible ways we should collect, remove, and use the scavengery and excrementitious matter of our streets and houses.

Now the removal of the refuse of London is no slight task, consisting, as it does, of the cleansing of 1750 miles of streets and roads; of collecting the dust from 300,000 dust-bins; of emptying (according to the returns of the Board of Health) the same number of cesspools, and sweeping near upon 3,000,000 chimneys.

A task so vast it might naturally be imagined would give employment to a number of hands, and yet, if we trusted the returns of the Occupation Abstract of 1841, the whole of these stupendous operations are performed by a limited number of individuals.

no less than 5400 chimneys! Pursuing the same mode of testing the validity of the "official" statements, we find, as the nightmen generally work in gangs of four, that each of the 63, or say 64, gangs comprised in the census returns, would have had 4000 cesspools to empty of their contents; while, working both as scavengers and nightmen (for, according to the census, they were the only individuals following those occupations in London), they would after their nocturnal labours have had about 27 miles of streets and roads to cleanse—a feat which would certainly have thrown the scavenging prowess of Hercules into the shade.

Under the respective heads of the dustmen, nightmen, sweeps, and scavengers, I shall give an account of the numbers, &c., employed, and a resumé of the whole. It will be sufficient here to mention that my investigations lead to the conclusion that, of men working as dustmen (a portion of whom are employed as nightmen and scavengers) there are at present about 1800 in the metropolis. The census of 1841, as I have pointed out, mentions no dustman whatever!

But I have so often had instances of the defects of this national numbering of the people that I have long since ceased to place much faith in its returns connected with the humbler grades of labour. The costermongers, for example, I estimate at about 10,000, whereas the government reports, as has been before mentioned, ignore the very existence of such a class of people, and make the entire hawkers, hucksters, and pedlars of the metropolis to amount to no more than 2045. Again, the London "coal labourers, heavers, and porters" are said, in the census of 1841, to be

only 1700 in number; I find, however, that there are no less than 1800 "registered" coal-whippers, and as many coal porters; so that I am in no way inclined to give great credence to the "official enumerations." The difficulties which beset the perfection of such a document are almost insuperable, and I have already heard of returns for the forthcoming document, made by ignorant people as to their occupations, which already go far to nullify the facts in connection with the employment of the ignorant and profligate classes of the metropolis.

Before quitting this part of the subject, viz., the extent of surface, the length of streets, and the number of houses throughout the metropolis requiring to be continually cleansed of their refuse, as well as the number of people as continually engaged in so cleansing them, let me here append the last returns of the Registrar General, copied from the census of 1851, as to the dimensions and contents of the metropolis according to that functionary, so that they may be compared with those of the metropolitan police before given.

In Weale's "London Exhibited," which is by far the most comprehensive description of the metropolis that I have seen, it is stated that it is "only possible to adopt a general idea of the giant city," as its precise boundaries and extent cannot be defined. On the north of the Thames, we are told, London extends to Edmonton and Finchley; on the west it stretches to Acton and Hammersmith; on the east it reaches Leyton and Ham; while on the south of the Thames the metropolis is said to embrace Wandsworth, Streatham, Lewisham, Woolwich, and Plumstead. "To each of these points," says Mr. Weale, but upon what authority he does not inform us, "continuous streets of houses reach; but the solid mass of houses lies within narrow bounds—with these several long arms extending from it. The greatest length of street, from east to west," he adds, "is about fourteen miles, and from north to south about thirteen miles. The solid mass is about seven miles by four miles, so that the ground covered with houses is not less than 20 square miles."

Mr. McCulloch, in his "London in 1850-51," has a passage to the same effect. He says, "The continued and rapid increase of buildings renders it difficult to ascertain the extent of the metropolis at any particular period. If we include in it those parts only that present a solid mass of houses, its length from east to west may be taken at six miles, and its breadth from north to south at about three miles and a half. There is, however, a nearly continuous line of houses from Blackwall to Chelsea, a distance of about seven miles, and from Walworth to Holloway, of four and a half miles. The extent of surface covered by buildings is estimated at about sixteen square miles, or above 10,000 acres, so that M. Say, the celebrated French economist, did not really indulge in hyperbole when he said, 'Londres n'est plus une ville: c'est une province couverte de maisons!' (London is no longer a town: it is a province covered with houses)."

The Government authorities, however, appear to have very different notions from either of the above gentlemen as to the extent of the metropolis.

The limits of London, as at present laid down by the Registrar General, include 176 parishes, besides several precincts, liberties, and extra-parochial places, comprising altogether about 115 square miles. According to the old bills of mortality, London formerly included only 148 parishes, which were located as follows:—

Parishes within the walls of the city . . . . .	97
Parishes without the walls . . . . .	17
Parishes in the city and liberties of Westminster . . . . .	10
Out parishes in Middlesex and Surrey . . . . .	24

148

The parishes which have been annexed to the above at different periods since the commencement of the present century are:—

Parishes added by the late Mr. Rickman (see Pop. Abstracts, 1801-31) (including Chelsea, Kensington, Paddington, St. Marylebone, and St. Pancras) . . . . .	5
Parishes added by the Registrar General, 1838 (including Hammersmith, Fulham, Stoke Newington, Stratford-le-Bow, Bromley, Camberwell, Deptford, Greenwich, and Woolwich) . . . . .	10
Parishes added by the Registrar General in 1844 (including Clapham, Battersea, Wandsworth, Putney, Lower Tooting, and Streatham) . . . . .	6
Parishes added by the Registrar General in 1846 (comprising Hampstead, Charlton, Plumstead, Eltham, Lee, Kidbrooke, and Lewisham) . . . . .	7

Total number of parishes in the metropolis, as defined by the Registrar General . . . . . 176

The extent of London, according to the limits assigned to it at the several periods above mentioned, was—

	Stat. Acres.	Sq. miles.
London within the old bills of mortality, from 1726 . . . . .	21,080	32
London, within the limits adopted by the late Mr. Rickman, 1801-31 . . . . .	29,850	46
London, within the limits adopted by the Registrar General, 1838-43 . . . . .	44,850	70
London, within the limits adopted by the Registrar General, 1844-46 . . . . .	55,650	87
London, within the limits adopted by the Registrar General in 1847-51 . . . . .	74,070	115

"London," observes Mr. Weale, "has now swallowed up many cities, towns, villages, and separate jurisdictions. The four commonwealths, or kingdoms, of the Middle Saxons, East Saxons, the South Rick, and the Kentwaras, once ruled over



its surface. It now embraces the episcopal cities of London and Westminster, the towns of Woolwich, Deptford, and Wandsworth, the watering places of Hampstead, Highgate, Islington, Acton, and Kilburn, the fishing town of Barking, the once secluded and ancient villages of Ham, Hornsey, Sydenham, Lee, Kensington, Fulham, Lambeth, Clapham, Paddington, Hackney, Chelsea,

Stoke Newington, Newington Butts, Plumstead, and many others.

The 176 parishes now included by the Registrar General within the boundaries of the metropolis, are arranged by him into five districts, of which the areas, population, and number of inhabited houses were on the 31st of March, 1851, as undermentioned:—

TABLE SHOWING THE AREA, NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES, AND POPULATION OF THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE METROPOLIS, 1841-51.

DIVISIONS OF METROPOLIS.	Statute Acres.	Population.		Inhabited Houses.	
		1841.	1851.	1841.	1851.
<b>WEST DISTRICTS.</b>					
Kensington . . . . .	7,860	74,893	119,990	10,962	17,292
Chelsea . . . . .	780	40,243	56,543	5,648	7,629
St. George's, Hanover-square . . . . .	1,090	66,657	73,207	7,630	8,795
Westminster . . . . .	840	56,802	65,609	6,439	6,647
St. Martin's-in-the-Fields . . . . .	260	25,132	24,557	2,439	2,323
St. James's, Westminster . . . . .	165	37,457	36,426	3,590	3,460
<b>NORTH DISTRICTS.</b>					
Marylebone . . . . .	1,490	138,383	157,679	14,169	15,955
Hampstead (added 1846) . . . . .	2,070	10,109	11,986	1,411	1,719
Pancras . . . . .	2,600	129,969	167,198	14,766	18,731
Islington . . . . .	3,050	55,779	95,154	8,508	13,553
Hackney . . . . .	3,950	42,328	58,424	7,192	9,861
<b>CENTRAL DISTRICTS.</b>					
St. Giles's . . . . .	250	54,378	54,062	4,959	4,773
Strand . . . . .	163	43,667	44,446	4,327	3,938
Holborn . . . . .	188	44,532	46,571	4,603	4,517
Clerkenwell . . . . .	320	56,799	64,705	6,946	7,259
St. Luke's . . . . .	240	49,908	54,058	6,385	6,421
East London . . . . .	†230	39,718	44,407	4,796	4,785
West London . . . . .	‡370	29,183	28,829	3,010	2,745
London, City of . . . . .	‡370	56,009	55,908	7,921	7,329
<b>EAST DISTRICTS.</b>					
Shoreditch . . . . .	620	83,564	109,209	12,642	15,433
Bethnal Green . . . . .	760	74,206	90,170	11,782	13,370
Whitechapel . . . . .	316	71,879	79,756	8,834	8,832
St. George's in the East . . . . .	230	41,416	48,375	5,985	6,151
Stepney . . . . .	2,518	90,831	110,669	14,364	16,346
Poplar . . . . .	1,250	31,171	47,157	5,066	6,882
<b>SOUTH DISTRICTS.</b>					
St. Saviour's, Southwark . . . . .	*	33,027	35,729	4,659	4,613
St. Olave's, Southwark . . . . .	*	19,869	19,367	2,523	2,365
Bermondsey . . . . .	620	35,002	48,128	5,674	7,095
St. George's, Southwark . . . . .	*590	46,718	51,825	6,663	7,005
Newington . . . . .	630	54,693	64,805	9,370	10,468
Lambeth . . . . .	3,640	116,072	139,240	17,791	20,520
Wandsworth (added 1843) . . . . .	10,800	39,918	50,770	6,459	8,290
Camberwell . . . . .	4,570	39,931	54,668	6,843	9,417
Rotherhithe . . . . .	690	13,940	17,778	2,420	2,834
Greenwich . . . . .	4,570	81,125	99,404	11,995	14,423
Lewisham (added 1846) . . . . .	16,350	23,051	34,831	3,966	5,986
<b>Total London Division . . . . .</b>	<b>74,070</b>	<b>1,948,369</b>	<b>2,361,640</b>	<b>262,737</b>	<b>307,722</b>

\* The area of the districts of St. Saviour and St. Olave is included in that returned for St. George, Southwark.  
 † The area here stated is that of the city without the walls, and includes White Friars precinct and Holy Trinity, Minorities, both belonging to other districts.  
 ‡ This area is that of the city within the walls, and does not include White Friars, which belongs to the district

In order to be able to compare the average density of the population in the various parts of London, I have made a calculation as to the number of persons and houses to the acre, as well as the number of inhabitants to each house. I have also computed the annual rate of increase of the population from 1841-51, in the several localities here mentioned, and append the result. It will

be seen that, while what are popularly known as the suburbs have increased, both in houses and population, at a considerable rate, some of the more central parts of London, on the contrary, have decreased not only in the number of people, but in the number of dwellings as well. This has been the case in St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, St. James's, Westminster, St. Giles's, and the City of London.

TABLE SHOWING THE INCREASE OF THE POPULATION AND INHABITED HOUSES, AS WELL AS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AND HOUSES TO EACH ACRE, AND THE NUMBER OF PERSONS TO EACH HOUSE IN THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE METROPOLIS IN 1841-51.

	Yearly Increase of Population per annum, from 1841-51.	Yearly Increase of Inhabited Houses, from 1841-51.	Number of People to the Acre, 1851.	Number of Inhabited Houses to the Acre, 1851.	Number of Persons to each House, 1851.
<b>WEST DISTRICTS.</b>					
Kensington . . . . .	4,509.2	633.0	15.2	2.2	6.9
Chelsea . . . . .	1,630.0	198.1	72.4	9.7	7.4
St. George's, Hanover-square . . . . .	655.0	11.6	67.1	8.0	8.3
Westminster . . . . .	880.7	20.8	80.4	8.2	9.8
St. Martin's-in-the-Fields . . . . .	decr. 57.5*	decr. 11.6*	94.3	8.9	10.5
St. James's, Westminster . . . . .	103.1*	13.0*	220.7	20.9	10.5
<b>NORTH DISTRICTS.</b>					
Marylebone . . . . .	1,926.6	178.6	105.8	10.3	9.8
Hampstead . . . . .	187.7	30.8	5.7	.8	6.9
St. Pancras . . . . .	3,722.9	396.5	64.3	7.2	8.9
Islington . . . . .	3,937.5	505.0	31.5	4.4	7.0
Hackney . . . . .	1,609.6	719.2	14.7	2.3	5.9
<b>CENTRAL DISTRICTS.</b>					
St. Giles's . . . . .	decr. 31.6*	decr. 18.1*	216.2	19.1	11.3
Strand . . . . .	77.9	decr. 38.9*	272.2	24.1	11.2
Holborn . . . . .	203.9	decr. 8.6*	247.7	24.0	10.3
Clerkenwell . . . . .	790.6	31.3	202.2	22.6	8.9
St. Luke's . . . . .	415.0	3.6	225.2	26.7	8.4
East and West London . . . . .	433.0	decr. 27.6*	318.4	32.7	9.7
London City . . . . .	decr. 10.1*	decr. 59.2*	151.0	19.8	7.6
<b>EAST DISTRICTS.</b>					
Shoreditch . . . . .	2,564.5	279.1	176.1	24.3	7.0
Bethnal-green . . . . .	1,596.4	153.8	118.6	17.5	6.7
Whitechapel . . . . .	787.7	decr. .2*	252.3	27.9	9.0
St. George's-in-the-East . . . . .	695.9	16.6	210.3	26.7	7.8
Stepney . . . . .	1,983.8	198.2	43.9	5.4	6.7
Poplar . . . . .	1,598.6	181.6	37.7	5.5	6.8
<b>SOUTH DISTRICTS.</b>					
St. Saviour's, St. Olave's, and St. George's, Southwark . . . . .	730.7	13.8	181.2	23.7	7.6
Bermondsey . . . . .	1,312.6	142.1	77.6	11.2	6.7
Newington . . . . .	1,011.2	109.8	102.8	16.6	6.1
Lambeth . . . . .	2,316.8	272.9	38.2	5.6	6.7
Wandsworth . . . . .	1,085.2	183.1	4.7	.7	6.1
Camberwell . . . . .	1,473.7	257.4	12.4	2.0	5.8
Rotherhithe . . . . .	383.8	41.4	25.7	4.1	6.2
Greenwich . . . . .	1,827.9	242.8	21.7	3.1	6.8
Lewisham . . . . .	1,173.0	197.0	2.1	.3	5.6
<b>Total for all London . . . . .</b>	<b>41,327.1</b>	<b>4,498.5</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>7.6</b>

\* The population and number of inhabited houses in these districts has decreased annually to this extent since 1841.

By the above table we perceive that St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, St. James's, Westminster, St. Giles's, the Strand, and the City have all decreased both in population and houses since 1841. The population has diminished most of all in St. James's, and the houses the most in the City. The suburban districts, however, such as Chelsea, Marylebone, St. Pancras, Islington, Hackney, Shoreditch, Bethnal-green, Stepney, Poplar, Bermondsey, Newington, Lambeth, Wandsworth, Camberwell, Greenwich, and Lewisham, have all increased greatly within the last ten years, both in dwellings and people. The greatest increase of the population, as well as houses, has been in Kensington, where the yearly addition has been 4500 people, and 630 houses.

The more densely-populated districts are, St. James's, Westminster, St. Giles's, the Strand, Holborn, Clerkenwell, St. Luke, Whitechapel, and St. George's-in-the-East, in all of which places there are upwards of 200 people to the acre, while in East and West London, in which the population is the most dense of all, the number of people exceeds 300 to the acre. The least densely populated districts are Hampstead, Wandsworth, and Lewisham, where the people are not more than six, and as few as two to the acre.

The districts in which there are the greatest number of houses to a given space, are St. James's, Westminster, the Strand, Holborn, Clerkenwell, St. Luke's, Shoreditch, and St. George's-in-the-East, in all of which localities there are upwards of 20 dwellings to each acre of ground, while in East and West London, which is the most closely built over of all, the number of houses to each acre are as many as 32. Hampstead and Lewisham appear to be the most open districts; for there the houses are not more than eight and three to every ten acres of ground.

The localities in which the houses are the most crowded with inmates are the Strand and St. Giles's, where there are more than eleven people to each house, and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and St. James's, Westminster, and Holborn, where each house has on an average ten inmates, while in Lewisham and Wandsworth the houses are the least crowded, for there we find only five people to every house.

Now, comparing this return with that of the metropolitan police, we have the following results as to the extent and contents of the Metropolis Proper:—

	According to Registrar General.	According to Metropolitan Police.
Area (in statute acres)	74,070	58,880
Parishes	176	179
Number of inhabited houses	307,722	305,525
Population	2,361,640	2,111,629

Hence it will be seen that both the extent and contents of these two returns differ most materially.

1st. The superficies of the Registrar General's metropolis is very nearly 13 square miles, or

15,190 statute acres, greater than the metropolis of the police commissioners.

2nd. The number of inhabited houses is 2197 more in the one than in the other.

3rd. The population of London, according to the Registrar General's limits, is 250,011, or a quarter of a million, more than it is according to the limits of the metropolitan police.

It were much to be desired that some more definite and scientific mode, not only of limiting, but of dividing the metropolis, were to be adopted. At present there are, perhaps, as many different metropolises, so to speak, and as many different modes of apportioning the several parts of the whole into districts, as there are public bodies whose operations are specially confined to the capital. The Registrar General has, as we have seen, one metropolis divided into western, northern, central, eastern, and southern districts. The metropolitan police commissioners have another metropolis apportioned into its A divisions, B divisions, and so forth; and the Post Office has a third metropolis parcelled out in a totally different manner; while the London City Mission, the Scripture Readers, the Ragged Schools, and the many other similar metropolitan institutions, all seem to delight in creating a distinct metropolis for themselves, thus tending to make the statistical "confusion worse confounded."

OF THE DUSTMEN OF LONDON.

DUST and rubbish accumulate in houses from a variety of causes, but principally from the residuum of fires, the white ash and cinders, or small fragments of unconsumed coke, giving rise to by far the greater quantity. Some notion of the vast amount of this refuse annually produced in London may be formed from the fact that the consumption of coal in the metropolis is, according to the official returns, 3,500,000 tons per annum, which is at the rate of a little more than 11 tons per house; the poorer families, it is true, do not burn more than 2 tons in the course of the year, but then many such families reside in the same house, and hence the average will appear in no way excessive. Now the ashes and cinders arising from this enormous consumption of coal would, it is evident, if allowed to lie scattered about in such a place as London, render, ere long, not only the back streets, but even the important thoroughfares, filthy and impassable. Upon the Officers of the various parishes, therefore, has devolved the duty of seeing that the refuse of the fuel consumed throughout London is removed almost as fast as produced; this they do by entering into an agreement for the clearance of the "dustbins" of the parishioners as often as required, with some person who possesses all necessary appliances for the purpose—such as horses, carts, baskets, and shovels, together with a plot of waste ground whereon to deposit the refuse. The persons with whom this agreement is made are called "dust-contractors," and are generally men of considerable wealth.

The collection of "dust," is now, more properly speaking, the removal of it. The collection of an

article implies the voluntary seeking after it, and this the dustmen can hardly be said to do; for though they parade the streets shouting for the dust as they go, they do so rather to fulfil a certain duty they have undertaken to perform than in any expectation of profit to be derived from the sale of the article.

Formerly the custom was otherwise; but then, as will be seen hereafter, the residuum of the London fuel was far more valuable. Not many years ago it was the practice for the various master dustmen to send in their tenders to the vestry, on a certain day appointed for the purpose, offering to pay a considerable sum yearly to the parish authorities for liberty to collect the dust from the several houses. The sum formerly paid to the parish of Shadwell, for instance, though not a very extensive one, amounted to between 400*l.* or 500*l.* per annum; but then there was an immense demand for the article, and the contractors were unable to furnish a sufficient supply from London; ships were frequently freighted with it from other parts, especially from Newcastle and the northern ports, and at that time it formed an article of considerable international commerce—the price being from 1*s.* to 1*l.* per chaldron. Of late years, however, the demand has fallen off greatly, while the supply has been progressively increasing, owing to the extension of the metropolis, so that the Contractors have not only declined paying anything for liberty to collect it, but now stipulate to receive a certain sum for the removal of it. It need hardly be stated that the parishes always employ the man who requires the least money for the performance of what has now become a matter of duty rather than an object of desire. Some idea may be formed of the change which has taken place in this business, from the fact, that the aforesaid parish of Shadwell, which formerly received the sum of 450*l.* per annum for liberty to collect the dust, now pays the Contractor the sum of 240*l.* per annum for its removal.

The Court of Sewers of the City of London, in 1846, through the advice of Mr. Cochrane, the president of the National Philanthropic Association, were able to obtain from the contractors the sum of 5000*l.* for liberty to clear away the dirt from the streets and the dust from the bins and houses in that district. The year following, however, the contractors entered into a combination, and came to a resolution not to bid so high for the privilege; the result was, that they obtained their contracts at an expense of 2200*l.* By acting on the same principle in the year after, they not only offered no premium whatever for the contract, but the City Commissioners of Sewers were obliged to pay them the sum of 300*l.* for removing the refuse, and at present the amount paid by the City is as much as 4000*l.* This is divided among four great contractors, and would, if equally apportioned, give them 1250*l.* each.

I subjoin a list of the names of the principal contractors and the parishes for which they are engaged:—

DISTRICTS CONTRACTED FOR.	NAMES OF CONTRACTORS.
Four divisions of the City.	{ Redding. Rook. J. Sinnott. J. Gould.
Finsbury-square	J. Gould.
St. Luke's	H. Dodd.
Shoreditch	Ditto
Norton Folgate	J. Gould.
Bethnal-green	E. Newman.
Holborn	Pratt and Sewell.
Hatton-garden	Ditto
Islington	Stroud, Brickmaker.
St. Martin's	Wm. Sinnott, Junior.
St. Mary-le-Strand	J. Gore.
St. Sepulchre	Ditto
Savoy	Ditto
St. Clement Danes	Rook.
St. James's, Clerkenwell	H. Dodd.
St. John's, ditto	J. Gould.
St. Margaret's, Westminster	W. Hearne.
St. John's, ditto	Stapleton and Holdsworth.
Lambeth	W. Hearne.
Chelsea	C. Humphries.
St. Marylebone	J. Gore.
Blackfriars-bridge	Jenkins.
St. Paul's, Covent-garden	W. Sinnott.
Piccadilly	H. Tame.
Regent-street and Pall-mall	W. Ridding.
St. George's, Hanover-sq.	H. Tame.
Paddington	C. Humphries.
Camden-town	Milton.
St. Pancras, S.W. Division	W. Stapleton.
Southampton estate	C. Starkey.
Skinner's ditto	H. North.
Brewer's ditto	C. Starkey.
Cromer ditto	Ditto.
Calthorpe ditto	Ditto.
Bedford ditto	Gore.
Doughty ditto	Martin.
Union ditto	J. Gore.
Foundling ditto	Pratt and Sewell.
Harrison ditto	Martin.
St. Ann's, Soho	J. Gore.
Whitechapel	Parsons.
Goswell-street	Redding.
Commercial-road, East	J. Sinnott.
Mile-end	Newman.
Borough	Hearne.
Bermondsey	The parish.
Kensington	H. Tame.
St. Giles's-in-the-Fields and St. George's, Bloomsbury	Redding.
Shadwell	Westley.
St. George's-in-the-East	Ditto.
Battle-bridge	Starkey.
Berkeley-square	Clutterbuck.
St. George's, Pimlico	Redding.
Woods and Forests	Ditto.
St. Botolph	Westley.
St. John's, Wapping	Ditto.
Somers-town	H. North.
Kentish-town	J. Gore.
Rolls (Liberty of the)	Pratt and Sewell.
Edward-square, Kensington	C. Humphries.

All the metropolitan parishes now pay the contractors various amounts for the removal of the dust, and I am credibly informed that there is a system of underletting and jobbing in the dust contracts extensively carried on. The contractor for a certain parish is often a different person from the master doing the work, who is unknown in the contract. Occasionally the work would appear to be subdivided and underlet a second time.

The parish of St. Pancras is split into no less than 21 districts, each district having a separate and independent "Board," who are generally at war with each other, and make separate contracts for their several divisions. This is also the case in other large parishes, and these and other considerations confirm me in the conclusion that of large and small

dust-contractors, job-masters, and middle-men, of one kind or the other, throughout the metropolis, there cannot be less than the number I have stated—90. With the exception of Bermondsey, there are no parishes who remove their own dust.

It is difficult to arrive at any absolute statement as to the gross amount paid by the different parishes for the removal of the entire dust of the metropolis. From Shadwell the contractor, as we have seen, receives 250*l.*; from the city the four contractors receive as much as 5000*l.*; but there are many small parishes in London which do not pay above a tithe of the last-mentioned sum. Let us, therefore, assume, that one with another, the several metropolitan parishes pay 200*l.* a year each to the dust contractor. According to the returns before given, there are 176 parishes in London. Hence, the gross amount paid for the removal of the entire dust of the metropolis will be between 30,000*l.* and 40,000*l.* per annum.

The removal of the dust throughout the metropolis, is, therefore, carried on by a number of persons called Contractors, who undertake, as has been stated, for a certain sum, to cart away the refuse from the houses as frequently as the inhabitants desire it. To ascertain the precise numbers of these contractors is a task of much greater difficulty than might at first be conceived.

The London Post Office Directory gives the following number of tradesmen connected with the removal of refuse from the houses and streets of the metropolis.

Dustmen . . . . .	9
Scavengers . . . . .	10
Nightmen . . . . .	14
Sweeps . . . . .	32

But these numbers are obviously incomplete, for even a cursory passenger through London must have noticed a greater number of names upon the various dust carts to be met with in the streets than are here set down.

A dust-contractor, who has been in the business upwards of 20 years, stated that, from his knowledge of the trade, he should suppose that at present there might be about 80 or 90 contractors in the metropolis. Now, according to the returns before given, there are within the limits of the Metropolitan Police District 176 parishes, and comparing this with my informant's statement, that many persons contract for more than one parish (of which, indeed, he himself is an instance), there remains but little reason to doubt the correctness of his supposition—that there are, in all, between 80 or 90 dust-contractors, large and small, connected with the metropolis. Assuming the aggregate number to be 88, there would be one contractor to every two parishes.

These dust-contractors are likewise the contractors for the cleansing of the streets, except where that duty is performed by the Street-Orderlies; they are also the persons who undertake the emptying of the cesspools in their neighbourhood; the latter operation, however, is effected by an arrangement between themselves and the landlords of the premises, and forms no part of their parochial contracts. At the office of the Street

Orderlies in Leicester Square, they have knowledge of only 30 contractors connected with the metropolis; but this is evidently defective, and refers to the "large masters" alone; leaving out of all consideration, as it does, the host of small contractors scattered up and down the metropolis, who are able to employ only two or three carts and six or seven men each; many of such small contractors being merely master sweeps who have managed to "get on a little in the world," and who are now able to contract, "in a small way," for the removal of dust, street-sweepings, and night-soil. Moreover, many of even the "great contractors" being unwilling to venture upon an outlay of capital for carts, horses, &c., when their contract is only for a year, and may pass at the end of that time into the hands of any one who may underbid them—many such, I repeat, are in the habit of underletting a portion of their contract to others possessing the necessary appliances, or of entering into partnership with them. The latter is the case in the parish of Shadwell, where a person having carts and horses shares the profits with the original contractor. The agreement made on such occasions is, of course, a secret, though the practice is by no means uncommon; indeed, there is so much secrecy maintained concerning all matters connected with this business, that the inquiry is beset with every possible difficulty. The gentleman who communicated to me the amount paid by the parish of Shadwell, and who informed me, moreover, that parishes in his neighbourhood paid twice and three times more than Shadwell did, hinted to me the difficulties I should experience at the commencement of my inquiry, and I have certainly found his opinion correct to the letter. I have ascertained that in one yard intimidation was resorted to, and the men were threatened with instant dismissal if they gave me any information but such as was calculated to mislead.

I soon discovered, indeed, that it was impossible to place any reliance on what some of the contractors said; and here I may repeat that the indisputable result of my inquiries has been to meet with far more deception and equivocation from employers generally than from the employed; working men have little or no motive for mis-stating their wages; they know well that the ordinary rates of remuneration for their labour are easily ascertainable from other members of the trade, and seldom or never object to produce accounts of their earnings, whenever they have been in the habit of keeping such things. With employers, however, the case is far different; to seek to ascertain from them the profits of their trade is to meet with evasion and prevarication at every turn; they seem to feel that their gains are dishonestly large, and hence resort to every means to prevent them being made public. That I have met with many honourable exceptions to this rule, I most cheerfully acknowledge; but that the majority of tradesmen are neither so frank, communicative, nor truthful, as the men in their employ, the whole of my investigations go to prove. I have already, in the *Morning Chronicle*, recorded the character of my interviews with an eminent Jew slop-tailor, an

army clothier, and an enterprising free-trade stay-maker (a gentleman who subscribed his 100 guineas to the League), and I must in candour confess that now, after two years' experience, I have found the industrious poor a thousand-fold more veracious than the trading rich.

With respect to the amount of business done by these contractors, or gross quantity of dust collected by them in the course of the year, it would appear that each employs, on an average, about 20 men, which makes the number of men employed as dustmen through the streets of London amount to 1800. This, as has been previously stated, is grossly at variance with the number given in the Census of 1841, which computes the dustmen in the metropolis at only 254. But, as I said before, I have long ceased to place confidence in the government returns on such subjects. According to the above estimate of 254, and deducting from this number the 88 master-dustmen, there would be only 166 labouring men to empty the 300,000 dust bins of London, and as these men always work in couples, it follows that every two dustmen would have to remove the refuse from about 3600 houses; so that assuming each bin to require emptying once every six weeks they would have to cart away the dust from 2400 houses every month, or 600 every week, which is at the rate of 100 a day! and as each dust-bin contains about half a load, it would follow that at this rate each cart would have to collect 50 loads of dust daily, whereas 5 loads is the average day's work.

Computing the London dust-contractors at 90, and the inhabited houses at 300,000, it follows that each contractor would have 3333 houses to remove the refuse from. Now it has been calculated that the ashes and cinders alone from each house average about three loads per annum, so that each contractor would have, in round numbers, 10,000 loads of dust to remove in the course of the year. I find, from inquiries, that every two dustmen carry to the yard about five loads a day, or about 1500 loads in the course of the year, so that at this rate, there must be between six and seven carts, and twelve and fourteen collectors employed by each master. But this is exclusive of the men employed in the yards. In one yard that I visited there were fourteen people busily employed. Six of these were women, who were occupied in sifting, and they were attended by three men who shovelled the dust into their sieves, and the foreman, who was hard at work loosening and dragging down the dust from the heap, ready for the "fillers-in." Besides these there were two carts and four men engaged in conveying the sifted dust to the barges alongside the wharf. At a larger dust-yard, that formerly stood on the banks of the Regent's canal, I am informed that there were sometimes as many as 127 people at work. It is but a small yard, which has not 30 to 40 labourers connected with it; and the lesser dust-yards have generally from four to eight sifters, and six or seven caris. There are, therefore, employed in a medium-sized yard twelve collectors or cartmen, six sifters, and three fillers-in, besides the foreman

or forewoman, making altogether 22 persons; so that, computing the contractors at 90, and allowing 20 men to be employed by each, there would be 1800 men thus occupied in the metropolis, which appears to be very near the truth.

One who has been all his life connected with the business estimated that there must be about ten dustmen to each metropolitan parish, large and small. In Marylebone he believed there were eighteen dust-carts, with two men to each, out every day; in some small parishes, however, two men are sufficient. There would be more men employed, he said, but some masters contracted for two or three parishes, and so "kept the same men going," working them hard, and enlarging their regular rounds. Calculating, then, that ten men are employed to each of the 176 metropolitan parishes, we have 1760 dustmen in London. The suburban parishes, my informant told me, were as well "dustmaned" as any he knew; for the residents in such parts were more particular about their dust than in busier places.

It is curious to observe how closely the number of men engaged in the collection of the "dust" from the coals burnt in London agrees, according to the above estimate, with the number of men engaged in delivering the coals to be burnt. The coal-whippers, who "discharge the colliers," are about 1800, and the coal-porters, who carry the coals from the barges to the merchants' wagons, are about the same in number. The amount of residuum from coal after burning cannot, of course, be equal either in bulk or weight to the original substance; but considering that the collection of the dust is a much slower operation than the delivery of the coals, the difference is easily accounted for.

We may arrive, approximately, at the quantity of dust annually produced in London, in the following manner:—

The consumption of coal in London, per annum, is about 3,500,000 tons, exclusive of what is brought to the metropolis per rail. Coals are made up of the following component parts, viz. (1) the inorganic and fixed elements; that is to say, the ashes, or the bones, as it were, of the fossil trees, which cannot be burnt; (2) coke, or the residuary carbon, after being deprived of the volatile matter; (3) the volatile matter itself given off during combustion in the form of flame and smoke.

The relative proportions of these materials in the various kinds of coals are as follows.—

	Carbon, per cent.	Volatile, per cent.	Ashes, per cent.
Cannel or gas coals.	40 to 60	60 to 40	10
Newcastle or "house" coals.	57	37	5
Lancashire and Yorkshire coals.	50 to 60	35 to 40	4
South Welsh or "steam" coals.	81 to 85	11 to 15	3
Anthracite or "stone" coals.	80 to 95	None	a little.

In the metropolis the Newcastle coal is chiefly

used, and this, we perceive, yields five per cent. ashes and about 57 per cent. carbon. But a considerable part of the carbon is converted into carbonic acid during combustion; if, therefore, we assume that two-thirds of the carbon are thus consumed, and that the remaining third remains behind in the form of cinder, we shall have about 25 per cent. of "dust" from every ton of coal. On inquiry of those who have had long experience in this matter, I find that a ton of coal may be fairly said on an average to yield about one-fourth its weight in dust; hence the gross amount of "dust" annually produced in London would be 900,000 tons, or about three tons per house per annum.

It is impossible to obtain any definite statistics on this part of the subject. Not one in every ten of the contractors keeps any account of the amount that comes into the "yard." An intelligent and communicative gentleman whom I consulted on this matter, could give me no information on this subject that was in any way satisfactory. I have, however, endeavoured to check the preceding estimate in the following manner. There are in London upwards of 300,000 inhabited houses, and each house furnishes a certain quota of dust to the general stock. I have ascertained that an average-sized house will produce, in the course of a year, about three cart-loads of dust, while each cart holds about 40 bushels (baskets)—what the dustmen call a chaldron. There are, of course, many houses in the metropolis which furnish three and four times this amount of dust, but against these may be placed the vast preponderance of small and poor houses in London and the suburbs, where there is not one quarter of the quantity produced, owing to the small amount of fuel consumed. Estimating, then, the average annual quantity of dust from each house at three loads, or chaldrons, and the houses at 300,000, it follows that the gross quantity collected throughout the metropolis will be about 900,000 chaldrons per annum.

The next part of the subject is—what becomes of this vast quantity of dust—to what use it is applied.

The dust thus collected is used for two purposes, (1) as a manure for land of a peculiar quality; and (2) for making bricks. The fine portion of the house-dust called "soil," and separated from the "brieze," or coarser portion, by sifting, is found to be peculiarly fitted for what is called breaking up a marshy heathy soil at its first cultivation, owing not only to the dry nature of the dust, but to its possessing in an eminent degree a highly separating quality, almost, if not quite, equal to sand. In former years the demand for this finer dust was very great, and barges were continually in the river waiting their turn to be loaded with it for some distant part of the country. At that time the contractors were unable to supply the demand, and easily got 1*l.* per chaldron for as much as they could furnish, and then, as I have stated, many ships were in the habit of bringing cargoes of it from the North, and of realizing a good profit on the transaction. Of late years,

however—and particularly, I am told, since the repeal of the corn-laws—this branch of the business has dwindled to nothing. The contractors say that the farmers do not cultivate their land now as they used; it will not pay them, and instead, therefore, of bringing fresh land into tillage, and especially such as requires this sort of manure, they are laying down that which they previously had in cultivation, and turning it into pasture grounds. It is principally on this account, say the contractors, that we cannot sell the dust we collect so well or so readily as formerly. There are, however, some cargoes of the dust still taken, particularly to the lowlands in the neighbourhood of Barking, and such other places in the vicinity of the metropolis as are enabled to realize a greater profit, by growing for the London markets. Nevertheless, the contractors are obliged now to dispose of the dust at 2*s.* 6*d.* per chaldron, and sometimes less.

The finer dust is also used to mix with the clay for making bricks, and barge-loads are continually shipped off for this purpose. The fine ashes are added to the clay in the proportion of one-fifth ashes to four-fifths clay, or 60 chaldrons to 240 cubic yards, which is sufficient to make 100,000 bricks (where much sand is mixed with the clay a smaller proportion of ashes may be used). This quantity requires also the addition of about 15 chaldrons, or, if mild, of about 12 chaldrons of "brieze," to aid the burning. The ashes are made to mix with the clay by collecting it into a sort of reservoir fitted up for the purpose; water in great quantities is let in upon it, and it is then stirred till it resembles a fine thin paste, in which state the dust easily mingles with every part of it. In this condition it is left till the water either soaks into the earth, or goes off by evaporation, when the bricks are moulded in the usual manner, the dust forming a component part of them.

The ashes, or cindered matter, which are thus dispersed throughout the substance of the clay, become, in the process of burning, gradually ignited and consumed. But the "brieze" (from the French *briser*, to break or crush), that is to say, the coarser portion of the coal-ash, is likewise used in the burning of the bricks. The small spaces left among the lowest courses of the bricks in the kiln, or "clamp," are filled with "brieze," and a thick layer of the same material is spread on the top of the kilns, when full. Frequently the "brieze" is mixed with small coals, and after having been burnt the ashes are collected, and then mixed with the clay to form new bricks. The highest price at present given for "brieze" is 3*s.* per ton.

The price of the dust used by the brick-makers has likewise been reduced; this the contractors account for by saying that there are fewer brick-fields than formerly near London, as they have been nearly all built over. They assert, that while the amount of dust and cinders has increased proportionately to the increase of the houses, the demand for the article has decreased in a like ratio; and that, moreover, the greater portion

of the bricks now used in London for the new buildings come from other quarters. Such dust, however, as the contractors sell to the brick-makers, they in general undertake, for a certain sum, to cart to the brick-fields, though it often happens that the brick-makers' carts coming into town with their loads of bricks to new buildings, call on their return at the dust-yards, and carry thence a load of dust or cinders back, and so save the price of cartage.

But during the operation of sifting the dust, many things are found which are useless for either manure or brick-making, such as oyster shells, old bricks, old boots and shoes, old tin kettles, old rags and bones, &c. These are used for various purposes.

The bricks, &c., are sold for sinking beneath foundations, where a thick layer of concrete is spread over them. Many old bricks, too, are used in making new roads, especially where the land is low and marshy. The old tin goes to form the japanned fastenings for the corners of trunks, as well as to other persons, who re-manufacture it into a variety of articles. The old shoes are sold to the London shoemakers, who use them as stuffing between the in-sole and the outer one; but by far the greater quantity is sold to the manufacturers of Prussian blue, that substance being formed out of refuse animal matter. The rags and bones are of course disposed of at the usual places—the marine-store shops.

A dust-heap, therefore, may be briefly said to be composed of the following things, which are severally applied to the following uses:—

1. "Soil," or fine dust, sold to brickmakers for making bricks, and to farmers for manure, especially for clover.
2. "Brieze," or cinders, sold to brickmakers, for burning bricks.
3. Rags, bones, and old metal, sold to marine-store dealers.
4. Old tin and iron vessels, sold for "clamps" to trunks, &c., and for making copperas.
5. Old bricks and oyster shells, sold to builders, for sinking foundations, and forming roads.
6. Old boots and shoes, sold to Prussian-blue manufacturers.
7. Money and jewellery, kept, or sold to Jews.

The dust-yards, or places where the dust is collected and sifted, are generally situated in the suburbs, and they may be found all round London, sometimes occupying open spaces adjoining back streets and lanes, and surrounded by the low mean houses of the poor; frequently, however, they cover a large extent of ground in the fields, and there the dust is piled up to a great height in a conical heap, and having much the appearance of a volcanic mountain. The reason why the dust-heaps are confined principally to the suburbs is, that more space is to be found in the outskirts than in a thickly-peopled and central locality. Moreover, the fear of indictments for nuisance has had considerable influence in the matter, for it was not unusual for the yards in former times, to be located within the boundaries of the city.

They are now, however, scattered round London, and always placed as near as possible to the river, or to some canal communicating therewith. In St. George's, Shadwell, Ratchiffe, Limehouse, Poplar, and Blackwall, on the north side of the Thames, and in Redriffe, Bermondsey, and Rotherhithe, on the south, they are to be found near the Thames. The object of this is, that by far the greater quantity of the soil or ashes is conveyed in sailing-barges, holding from 70 to 100 tons each, to Feversham, Sittingbourne, and other places in Kent, which are the great brick-making manufactories for London. These barges come up invariably loaded with bricks, and take home in return a cargo of soil. Other dust-yards are situated contiguous to the Regent's and the Surrey canal; and for the same reason as above stated—for the convenience of water carriage. Moreover, adjoining the Limehouse cut, which is a branch of the Lea River, other dust-yards may be found; and again travelling to the opposite end of the metropolis, we discover them not only at Paddington on the banks of the canal, but at Maiden-lane in a similar position. Some time since there was an immense dust-heap in the neighbourhood of Gray's-inn-lane, which sold for 20,000*l.*; but that was in the days when 15*s.* and 1*l.* per chaldron could easily be procured for the dust. According to the present rate, not a tithe of that amount could have been realized upon it.

A visit to any of the large metropolitan dust-yards is far from uninteresting. Near the centre of the yard rises the highest heap, composed of what is called the "soil," or finer portion of the dust used for manure. Around this heap are numerous lesser heaps, consisting of the mixed dust and rubbish carted in and shot down previous to sifting. Among these heaps are many women and old men with sieves made of iron, all busily engaged in separating the "brieze" from the "soil." There is likewise another large heap in some other part of the yard, composed of the cinders or "brieze" waiting to be shipped off to the brickfields. The whole yard seems alive, some sifting and others shovelling the sifted soil on to the heap, while every now and then the dust-carts return to discharge their loads, and proceed again on their rounds for a fresh supply. Cocks and hens keep up a continual scratching and cackling among the heaps, and numerous pigs seem to find great delight in rooting incessantly about after the garbage and offal collected from the houses and markets.

In a dust-yard lately visited the sifters formed a curious sight; they were almost up to their middle in dust, ranged in a semi-circle in front of that part of the heap which was being "worked," each had before her a small mound of soil which had fallen through her sieve and formed a sort of embankment, behind which she stood. The appearance of the entire group at their work was most peculiar. Their coarse dirty cotton gowns were tucked up behind them, their arms were bared above their elbows, their black bonnets crushed and battered like

those of fish-women; over their gowns they wore a strong leathern apron, extending from their necks to the extremities of their petticoats, while over this, again, was another leathern apron, shorter, thickly padded, and fastened by a stout string or strap round the waist. In the process of their work they pushed the sieve from them and drew it back again with apparent violence, striking it against the outer leathern apron with such force that it produced each time a hollow sound, like a blow on the tenor drum. All the women present were middle aged, with the exception of one who was very old—68 years of age she told me—and had been at the business from a girl. She was the daughter of a dustman, the wife, or woman of a dustman, and the mother of several young dustmen—sons and grandsons—all at work at the dust-yards at the east end of the metropolis.

We now come to speak of the labourers engaged in collecting, sifting, or shipping off the dust of the metropolis.

The dustmen, scavengers, and nightmen are, to a certain extent, the same people. The contractors generally agree with the various parishes to remove both the dust from the houses and the mud from the streets; the men in their employ are indiscriminately engaged in these two diverse occupations, collecting the dust to-day, and often cleansing the streets on the morrow, and are designated either dustmen or scavengers, according to their particular avocation at the moment. The case is somewhat different, however, with respect to the nightmen. There is no such thing as a contract with the parish for removing the nightsoil. This is done by private agreement with the landlord of the premises whence the soil has to be removed. When a cesspool requires emptying, the occupying tenant communicates with the landlord, who makes an arrangement with a dust-contractor or sweep-nightman for this purpose. This operation is totally distinct from the regular or daily labour of the dust-contractor's men, who receive extra pay for it; sometimes one set go out at night and sometimes another, according either to the selection of the master or the inclination of the men. There are, however, some dustmen who have never been at work as nightmen, and could not be induced to do so, from an invincible antipathy to the employment; still, such instances are few, for the men generally go whenever they can, and occasionally engage in nightwork for employers unconnected with their masters. It is calculated that there are some hundreds of men employed nightly in the removal of the nightsoil of the metropolis during the summer and autumn, and as these men have often to work at dust-collecting or cleansing the streets on the following day, it is evident that the same persons cannot be thus employed every night; accordingly the ordinary practice is for the dustmen to "take it in turns," thus allowing each set to be employed every third night, and to have two nights' rest in the interim.

The men, therefore, who collect the dust on one day may be cleaning the streets on the next,

especially during wet weather, and engaged at night, perhaps, twice during the week, in removing nightsoil; so that it is difficult to arrive at any precise notion as to the number of persons engaged in any one of these branches *per se*.

But these labourers not only work indiscriminately at the collection of dust, the cleansing of the streets, or the removal of nightsoil, but they are employed almost as indiscriminately at the various branches of the dust business; with this qualification, however, that few men apply themselves continuously to any one branch of the business. The labourers employed in a dust-yard may be divided into two classes: those paid by the contractor; and those paid by the foreman or forewoman of the dust-heap, commonly called hill-man or hill-woman.

They are as follows:—

I. LABOURERS PAID BY THE CONTRACTORS, OR,

1. *Yard foreman*, or superintendent. This duty is often performed by the master, especially in small contracts.
2. *Gangers* or *dust-collectors*. These are called "fillers" and "carriers," from the practice of one of the men who go out with the cart filling the basket, and the other carrying it on his shoulder to the vehicle.
3. *Loaders* of carts in the dust-yard for shipment.
4. *Carriers* of cinders to the cinder-heap, or bricks to the brick-heap.
5. *Foreman* or *forewoman* of the heap.

II. LABOURERS PAID BY THE HILL-MAN OR HILL-WOMAN.

1. *Sifters*, who are generally women, and mostly the wives or concubines of the dustmen, but sometimes the wives of badly-paid labourers.
2. *Fillers-in*, or shovellers of dust into the sieves of the sifters (one man being allowed to every two or three women).
3. *Carriers off* of bones, rags, metal, and other perquisites to the various heaps; these are mostly children of the dustmen.

A medium-sized dust-yard will employ about twelve collectors, three fillers-in, six sifters, and one foreman or forewoman; while a large yard will afford work to about 150 people.

There are four different modes of payment prevalent among the several labourers employed at the metropolitan dust-yards:—(1) by the day; (2) by the piece or load; (3) by the lump; (4) by perquisites.

1st. The foreman of the yard, where the master does not perform this duty himself, is generally one of the regular dustmen picked out by the master, for this purpose. He is paid, the sum of 2s. 6d. per day, or 15s. per week. In large yards there are sometimes two and even three yard-foremen at the same rate of wages. Their duty is merely to superintend the work. They do not labour themselves, and their exemption in this respect is considered, and indeed looked on by themselves, as a sort of premium for good services.

2nd. The gangers or collectors are generally

paid 8d. per load for every load they bring into the yard. This is, of course, piece work, for the more hours the men work the more loads will they be enabled to bring, and the more pay will they receive. There are some yards where the carters get only 6d. per load, as, for instance, at Paddington. The Paddington men, however, are not considered inferior workmen to the rest of their fellows, but merely to be worse paid. In 1826, or 25 years ago, the carters had 1s. 6d. per load; but at that time the contractors were able to get 1l. per chaldron for the soil and "brieze" or cinders; then it began to fall in value, and according to the decrease in the price of these commodities, so have the wages of the dust-collectors been reduced. It will be at once seen that the reduction in the wages of the dustmen bears no proportion to the reduction in the price of soil and cinders, but it must be borne in mind that whereas the contractors formerly paid large sums for liberty to collect the dust, they now are paid large sums to remove it. This in some measure helps to account for the apparent disproportion, and tends, perhaps, to equalize the matter. The gangers, therefore, have 4d. each, per load when best paid. They consider from four to six loads a good day's work, for where the contract is large, extending over several parishes, they often have to travel a long way for a load. It thus happens that while the men employed by the Whitechapel contractor can, when doing their utmost, manage to bring only four loads a day to the yard, which is situated in a place called the "ruins" in Lower Shadwell, the men employed by the Shadwell contractor can easily get eight or nine loads in a day. Five loads are about an average day's work, and this gives them 1s. 8½d. per day each, or 10s. per week. In addition to this, the men have their perquisites "in aid of wages." The collectors are in the habit of getting beer or money in lieu thereof, at nearly all the houses from which they remove the dust, the public being thus in a manner compelled to make up the rate of wages, which should be paid by the employer, so that what is given to benefit the men really goes to the master, who invariably reduces the wages to the precise amount of the perquisites obtained. This is the main evil of the "perquisite system of payment" (a system of which the mode of paying waiters may be taken as the special type). As an instance of the injurious effects of this mode of payment in connection with the London dustmen, the collectors are forced, as it were, to extort from the public that portion of their fair earnings of which their master deprives them; hence, how can we wonder that they make it a rule when they receive neither beer nor money from a house to make as great a mess as possible the next time they come, scattering the dust and cinders about in such a manner, that, sooner than have any trouble with them, people mostly give them what they look for? One of the most intelligent men with whom I have spoken, gave me the following account of his perquisites for the last week, viz.: Monday, 5½d.; Tuesday, 6d.; Wednesday, 4½d.; Thursday, 7d.; Friday, 5½d.; and Saturday, 5d. This he received

in money, and was independent of beer. He had on the same week drawn rather more than five loads each day, to the yard, which made his gross earnings for the week, wages and perquisites together, to be 14s. 0½d. which he considers to be a fair average of his weekly earnings as connected with dust.

3rd. The loaders of the carts for shipment are the same persons as those who collect the dust, but thus employed for the time being. The pay for this work is by the "piece" also, 2d. per chaldron between four persons being the usual rate, or ¼d. per man. The men so engaged have no perquisites. The barges into which they shoot the soil or "brieze," as the case may be, hold from 50 to 70 chaldrons, and they consider the loading of one of these barges a good day's work. The average cargo is about 60 chaldrons, which gives them 2s. 6d. per day, or somewhat more than their average earnings when collecting.

4th. The carriers of cinders to the cinder heap. I have mentioned that, ranged round the sifters in the dust-yard, are a number of baskets, into which are put the various things found among the dust, some of these being the property of the master, and others the perquisites of the hill man or woman, as the case may be. The cinders and old bricks are the property of the master, and to remove them to their proper heaps boys are employed by him at 1s. per day. These boys are almost universally the children of dustmen and sifters at work in the yard, and thus not only help to increase the earnings of the family, but qualify themselves to become the dustmen of a future day.

5th. The hill-man or hill-woman. The hill-man enters into an agreement with the contractor to sift *all* the dust in the yard throughout the year at so much per load and perquisites. The usual sum per load is 6d., nor have I been able to ascertain that any of these people undertake to do it at a less price. Such is the amount paid by the contractor for Whitechapel. The perquisites of the hill-man or hill-woman, are rags, bones, pieces of old metal, old tin or iron vessels, old boots and shoes, and one-half of the money, jewellery, or other valuables that may be found by the sifters.

The hill-man or hill-woman employs the following persons, and pays them at the following rates.

1st. The sifters are paid 1s. per day when employed, but the employment is not constant. The work cannot be pursued in wet weather, and the services of the sifters are required only when a large heap has accumulated, as they can sift much faster than the dust can be collected. The employment is therefore precarious; the payment has not, for the last 30 years at least, been more than 1s. per day, but the perquisites were greater. They formerly were allowed one-half of whatever was found; of late years, however, the hill-man has gradually reduced the perquisites "first one thing and then another," until the only one they have now remaining is half of whatever money or other valuable article may be found in the process of sifting. These valuables the sifters often pocket, if able to do so unperceived, but if discovered in the attempt, they are immediately discharged.

2nd. "The fillers-in," or shovellers of dust into the sieves of sifters, are in general any poor fellows who may be straggling about in search of employment. They are sometimes, however, the grown-up boys of dustmen, not yet permanently engaged by the contractor. These are paid 2s. per day for their labour, but they are considered more as casualty men, though it often happens, if "hands" are wanted, that they are regularly engaged by the contractors, and become regular dustmen for the remainder of their lives.

3rd. The little fellows, the children of the dustmen, who follow their mothers to the yard, and help them to pick rags, bones, &c., out of the sieve and put them into the baskets, as soon as they are able to carry a basket between two of them to the separate heaps, are paid 3d. or 4d. per day for this work by the hill-man.

The wages of the dustmen have been increased within the last seven years from 6d. per load to 8d. among the large contractors—the "small masters," however, still continue to pay 6d. per load. This increase in the rate of remuneration was owing to the men complaining to the commissioners that they were not able to live upon what they earned at 6d.; an enquiry was made into the truth of the men's assertion, and the result was that the commissioners decided upon letting the contracts to such parties only as would undertake to pay a fair price to their workmen. The contractors, accordingly, increased the remuneration of the labourers; since then the principal masters have paid 8d. per load to the collectors. It is right I should add, that I could not hear—though I made special enquiries on the subject—that the wages had been in any one instance reduced since Free-trade has come into operation.

The usual hours of labour vary according to the mode of payment. The "collectors," or men out with the cart, being paid by the load, work as long as the light lasts; the "fillers-in" and sifters, on the other hand, being paid by the day, work the ordinary hours, viz., from six to six, with the regular intervals for meals.

The summer is the worst time for all hands, for then the dust decreases in quantity; the collectors, however, make up for the "slackness" at this period by nightwork, and, being paid by the "piece" or load at the dust business, are not discharged when their employment is less brisk.

It has been shown that the dustmen who perambulate the streets usually collect five loads in a day; this, at 8d. per load, leaves them about 1s. 8d. each, and so makes their weekly earnings amount to about 10s. per week. Moreover, there are the "perquisites" from the houses whence they remove the dust; and further, the dust-collectors are frequently employed at the night-work, which is always a distinct matter from the dust-collecting, &c., and paid for independent of their regular weekly wages, so that, from all I can gather, the average wages of the men appear to be rather more than 15s. Some admitted to me, that in busy times they often earned 25s. a week.

Then, again, dustwork, as with the weaving of

silk, is a kind of family work. The husband, wife, and children (unfortunately) all work at it. The consequence is, that the earnings of the whole have to be added together in order to arrive at a notion of the aggregate gains.

The following may therefore be taken as a fair average of the earnings of a dustman and his family when in full employment. The elder boys when able to earn 1s. a day set up for themselves, and do not allow their wages to go into the common purse.

	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Man, 5 loads per day, or 30 loads per week, at 4d. per load . . . . .	0	10	0			
Perquisites, or beer money . . . . .	0	2	9½			
Night-work for 2 nights a week . . . . .	0	5	0			
				0	17	9½
Woman, or sifter, per week, at 1s. per day . . . . .	0	6	0			
Perquisites, say 3d. a day . . . . .	0	1	6			
				0	7	6
Child, 3d. per day, car- rying rags, bones, &c. . . . .				0	1	6
Total . . . . .				1	6	9½

These are the earnings, it should be borne in mind, of a family in full employment. Perhaps it may be fairly said that the earnings of the single men are, on an average, 15s. a week, and 1l. for the family men all the year round.

Now, when we remember that the wages of many agricultural labourers are but 8s. a week, and the earnings of many needlewomen not 6d. a day, it must be confessed that the remuneration of the dustmen, and even of the dustwomen, is comparatively high. This certainly is not due to what Adam Smith, in his chapter on the Difference of Wages, terms the "disagreeableness of the employment." "The wages of labour," he says, "vary with the ease or hardship, the cleanliness or dirtiness, the honourableness or dishonourableness, of the employment." It will be seen—when we come to treat of the nightmen—that the most offensive, and perhaps the least honourable, of all trades, is far from ranking among the best paid, as it should, if the above principle held good. That the disagreeableness of the occupation may in a measure tend to decrease the competition among the labourers, there cannot be the least doubt, but that it will consequently induce, as political economy would have us believe, a larger amount of wages to accrue to each of the labourers, is certainly another of the many assertions of that science which must be pronounced "not proven." For the dustmen are paid, if anything, less, and certainly not more, than the usual rate of payment to the London labourers; and if the earnings rank high, as times go, it is because all the members of the family, from the very earliest age, are able to work at the business, and so add to the general gains.



THE BEARDED CROSSING-SWEEPER AT THE EXCHANGE.

[From a Photograph.]

The dustmen are, generally speaking, an hereditary race; when children they are reared in the dust-yard, and are habituated to the work gradually as they grow up, after which, almost as a natural consequence, they follow the business for the remainder of their lives. These may be said to be born-and-bred dustmen. The numbers of the regular men are, however, from time to time recruited from the ranks of the many ill-paid labourers with which London abounds. When hands are wanted for any special occasion an employer has only to go to any of the dock-gates, to find at all times hundreds of starving wretches anxiously watching for the chance of getting something to do, even at the rate of 4*d.* per hour. As the operation of emptying a dust-bin requires only the ability to handle a shovel, which every labouring man can manage, all workmen, however unskilled, can at once engage in the occupation; and it often happens that the men thus casually employed remain at the calling for the remainder of their lives. There are no houses of call whence the men are taken on when wanting work. There are certainly public-houses, which are denominated houses of call, in the neighbourhood of every dust-yard, but these are merely the drinking shops of the men, whither they resort of an evening after the labour of the day is accomplished, and whence they are furnished in the course of the afternoon with beer; but such houses cannot be said to constitute the dustman's "labour-market," as in the tailoring and other trades, they being never resorted to as hiring-places, but rather used by the men only when hired. If a master have not enough "hands" he usually inquires among his men, who mostly know some who—owing, perhaps, to the failure of their previous master in getting his usual contract—are only casually employed at other places. Such men are immediately engaged in preference to others; but if these cannot be found, the contractors at once have recourse to the system already stated.

The manner in which the dust is collected is very simple. The "filler" and the "carrier" perambulate the streets with a heavily-built high box cart, which is mostly coated with a thick crust of filth, and drawn by a clumsy-looking horse. These men used, before the passing of the late Street Act, to ring a dull-sounding bell so as to give notice to housekeepers of their approach, but now they merely cry, in a hoarse unmusical voice, "Dust oy-eh!" Two men accompany the cart, which is furnished with a short ladder and two shovels and baskets. These baskets one of the men fills from the dust-bin, and then helps them alternately, as fast as they are filled, upon the shoulder of the other man, who carries them one by one to the cart, which is placed immediately alongside the pavement in front of the house where they are at work. The carrier mounts up the side of the cart by means of the ladder, discharges into it the contents of the basket on his shoulder, and then returns below for the other basket which his mate has filled for him in the interim. This process is pursued till all is cleared away, and repeated at different houses

till the cart is fully loaded; then the men make the best of their way to the dust-yard, where they shoot the contents of the cart on to the heap, and again proceed on their regular rounds.

The dustmen, in their appearance, very much resemble the waggomers of the coal-merchants. They generally wear knee-breeches, with ankle boots or gaiters, short dirty smockfrocks or coarse gray jackets, and fantail hats. In one particular, however, they are at first sight distinguishable from the coal-merchants' men, for the latter are invariably black from coal dust, while the dustmen, on the contrary, are gray with ashes.

In their personal appearance the dustmen are mostly tall stalwart fellows; there is nothing sickly-looking about them, and yet a considerable part of their time is passed in the yards and in the midst of effluvia most offensive, and, if we believe "zymotic theorists," as unhealthy to those unaccustomed to them; nevertheless, the children, who may be said to be reared in the yard and to have inhaled the stench of the dust-heap with their first breath, are healthy and strong. It is said, moreover, that during the plague in London the dustmen were the persons who carted away the dead, and it remains a tradition among the class to the present day, that not one of them died of the plague, even during its greatest ravages. In Paris, too, it is well known, that, during the cholera of 1849, the quarter of Belleville, where the night-soil and refuse of the city is deposited, escaped the freest from the pestilence; and in London the dustmen boast that, during both the recent visitations of the cholera, they were altogether exempt from the disease. "Look at that fellow, sir!" said one of the dust-contractors to me, pointing to his son, who was a stout red-cheeked young man of about twenty. "Do you see anything ailing about him? Well, he has been in the yard since he was born. There stands my house just at the gate, so you see he hadn't far to travel, and when quite a child he used to play and root away here among the dust all his time. I don't think he ever had a day's illness in his life. The people about the yard are all used to the smell and don't complain about it. It's all stuff and nonsense, all this talk about dust-yards being unhealthy. I've never done anything else all my days and I don't think I look very ill. I shouldn't wonder now but what I'd be set down as being fresh from the sea-side by those very fellows that write all this trash about a matter that they don't know just *that* about;" and he snapped his fingers contemptuously in the air, and, thrusting both hands into his breeches pockets, strutted about, apparently satisfied that he had the best of the argument. He was, in fact, a stout, jolly, red-faced man. Indeed, the dustmen, as a class, appear to be healthy, strong men, and extraordinary instances of longevity are common among them. I heard of one dustman who lived to be 115 years; another, named Wood, died at 100; and the well-known Richard Tyrrell died only a short time back at the advanced age of 97. The misfortune is, that we have no large series of facts on this subject, so that the longevity and

health of the dustmen might be compared with those of other classes.

In almost all their habits the Dustmen are similar to the Costermongers, with the exception that they seem to want their cunning and natural quickness, and that they have little or no predilection for gaming. Costermongers, however, are essentially traders, and all trade is a species of gambling—the risking of a certain sum of money to obtain more; hence spring, perhaps, the gambling propensities of low traders, such as costers, and Jew clothes-men; and hence, too, that natural sharpness which characterizes the same classes. The dustmen, on the contrary, have regular employment and something like regular wages, and therefore rest content with what they can earn in their usual way of business.

Very few of them understand cards, and I could not learn that they ever play at "pitch and toss." I remarked, however, a number of parallel lines such as are used for playing "shove halfpenny," on a deal table in the tap-room frequented by them. The great amusement of their evenings seems to be, to smoke as many pipes of tobacco and drink as many pots of beer as possible.

I believe it will be found that all persons in the habit of driving horses, such as cabmen, busmen, stage-coach drivers, &c., are peculiarly partial to intoxicating drinks. The cause of this I leave others to determine, merely observing that there would seem to be two reasons for it: the first is, their frequent stopping at public-houses to water or change their horses, so that the idea of drinking is repeatedly suggested to their minds even if the practice be not *expected* of them; while the second reason is, that being out continually in the wet, they resort to stimulating liquors as a preventive to "colds" until at length a habit of drinking is formed. Moreover, from the mere fact of passing continually through the air, they are enabled to drink a greater quantity with comparative impunity. Be the cause, however, what it may, the dustmen spend a large proportion of their earnings in drink. There is always some public-house in the neighbourhood of the dust-yard, where they obtain credit from one week to another, and here they may be found every night from the moment their work is done, drinking, and smoking their long pipes—their principal amusement consisting in "chaffing" each other. This "chaffing" consists of a species of scurrilous jokes supposed to be given and taken in good part, and the noise and uproar occasioned thereby increases as the night advances, and as the men get heated with liquor. Sometimes the joking ends in a general quarrel; the next morning, however, they are all as good friends as ever, and mutually agree in laying the blame on the "cussed drink."

One-half, at least, of the dustmen's earnings, is, I am assured, expended in drink, both man and woman assisting in squandering their money in this way. They usually live in rooms for which they pay from 1s. 6d. to 2s. per week rent, three or four dustmen and their wives frequently lodging in the same house. These rooms are cheerless-looking, and almost unfurnished—and are always situate

in some low street or lane not far from the dust-yard. The men have rarely any clothes but those in which they work. For their breakfast the dustmen on their rounds mostly go to some cheap coffee-house, where they get a pint or half-pint of coffee, taking their bread with them as a matter of economy. Their midday meal is taken in the public-house, and is almost always bread and cheese and beer, or else a saveloy or a piece of fat pork or bacon, and at night they mostly "wind up" by deep potations at their favourite house of call.

There are many dustmen now advanced in years born and reared at the East-end of London, who have never in the whole course of their lives been as far west as Temple-bar, who know nothing whatever of the affairs of the country, and who have never attended a place of worship. As an instance of the extreme ignorance of these people, I may mention that I was furnished by one of the contractors with the address of a dustman whom his master considered to be one of the most intelligent men in his employ. Being desirous of hearing his statement from his own lips I sent for the man, and after some conversation with him was proceeding to note down what he said, when the moment I opened my note-book and took the pencil in my hand, he started up, exclaiming—"No, no! I'll have none of that there work—I'm not such a b—fool as you takes me to be—I doesn't understand it, I tells you, and I'll not have it, now that's plain;"—and so saying he ran out of the room, and descended the entire flight of stairs in two jumps. I followed him to explain, but unfortunately the pencil was still in one hand and the book in the other, and immediately I made my appearance at the door he took to his heels, again with three others who seemed to be waiting for him there. One of the most difficult points in my labours is to make such men as these comprehend the object or use of my investigations.

Among 20 men whom I met in one yard, there were only five who could read, and only two out of that five could write, even imperfectly. These two are looked up to by their companions as prodigies of learning and are listened to as oracles, on all occasions, being believed to understand every subject thoroughly. It need hardly be added, however, that their acquirements are of the most meagre character.

The dustmen are very partial to a song, and always prefer one of the doggerel street ballads, with what they call a "jolly chorus" in which, during their festivities, they all join with stentorian voices. At the conclusion there is usually a loud stamping of feet and rattling of quart pots on the table, expressive of their approbation.

The dustmen never frequent the twopenny hops, but sometimes make up a party for the "theatre." They generally go in a body with their wives, if married, and their "gals," if single. They are always to be found in the gallery, and greatly enjoy the melodramas performed at the second-class minor theatres, especially if there be plenty of murdering scenes in them. The Garrick, previous to its being burnt, was a favourite

resort of the East-end dustmen. Since that period they have patronized the Pavilion and the City of London.

The politics of the dustmen are on a par with their literary attainments—they cannot be said to have any. I cannot say that they are Chartists, for they have no very clear knowledge of what "the charter" requires. They certainly have a confused notion that it is something against the Government, and that the enactment of it would make them all right; but as to the nature of the benefits which it would confer upon them, or in what manner it would be likely to operate upon their interest, they have not, as a body, the slightest idea. They have a deep-rooted antipathy to the police, the magistrates, and all connected with the administration of justice, looking upon them as their natural enemies. They associate with none but themselves; and in the public-houses where they resort there is a room set apart for the special use of the "dusties," as they are called, where no others are allowed to intrude, except introduced by one of themselves, or at the special desire of the majority of the party, and on such occasions the stranger is treated with great respect and consideration.

As to the morals of these people, it may easily be supposed that they are not of an over-strict character. One of the contractors said to me, "I'd just trust one of them as far as I could fling a bull by the tail; *but then*," he added, with a callousness that proved the laxity of discipline among the men was due more to his neglect of his duty to them than from any special perversity on their parts, "*that's none of my business; they do my work, and that's all I want with them, and all I care about.*" You see they're not like other people, they're reared to it. Their fathers before them were dustmen, and when lads they go into the yard as sifters, and when they grow up they take to the shovel, and go out with the carts. They learn all they know in the dust-yards, and you may judge from that what their learning is likely to be. If they find anything among the dust you may be sure that neither you nor I will ever hear anything about it; ignorant as they are, they know a little too much for that. They know, as well as here and there one, where the dolly-shop is; *but, as I said before, that's none of my business. Let every one look out for themselves, as I do, and then they need not care for any one.*" [With such masters professing such principles—though it should be stated that the sentiments expressed on this occasion are but similar to what I hear from the lower class of traders every day—how can it be expected that these poor fellows can be above the level of the mere beasts of burden that they use.] "As to their women," continued the master, "I don't trouble my head about such things. I believe the dustmen are as good to them as other men, and I'm sure their wives would be as good as other women, if they only had the chance of the best. But you see they're all such fellows

for drink that they spend most of their money that way, and then starve the poor women, and knock them about at a shocking rate, so that they have the life of dogs, or worse. I don't wonder at anything they do. Yes, they're all married, as far as I know; that is, they live together as man and wife, though they're not very particular, certainly, about the ceremony. The fact is, a regular dustman don't understand much about such matters, and, I believe, don't care much, either."

From all I could learn on this subject, it would appear that, for one dustman that is married, 20 live with women, but remain constant to them; indeed, both men and women abide faithfully by each other, and for this reason—the woman earns nearly half as much as the man. If the men and women were careful and prudent, they might, I am assured, live well and comfortable; but by far the greater portion of the earnings of both go to the publican, for I am informed, on competent authority, that a dustman will not think of sitting down for a spree without his woman. The children, as soon as they are able to go into the yard, help their mothers in picking out the rags, bones, &c., from the sieve, and in putting them in the basket. They are never sent to school, and as soon as they are sufficiently strong are mostly employed in some capacity or other by the contractor, and in due time become dustmen themselves. Some of the children, in the neighbourhood of the river, are mud-larks, and others are bone-grubbers and rag-gatherers, on a small scale; neglected and thrown on their own resources at an early age, without any but the most depraved to guide them, it is no wonder to find that many of them turn thieves. To this state of the case there are, however, some few exceptions.

Some of the dustmen are prudent well-behaved men and have decent homes; many of this class have been agricultural labourers, who by distress, or from some other cause, have found their way to London. This was the case with one whom I talked with: he had been a labourer in Essex, employed by a farmer named Izzod, whom he spoke of as being a kind good man. Mr. Izzod had a large farm on the Earl of Mornington's estate, and after he had sunk his capital in the improvement of the land, and was about to reap the fruits of his labour and his money, the farmer was ejected at a moment's notice, beggared and broken-hearted. This occurred near Roydon, in Essex. The labourer, finding it difficult to obtain work in the country, came to London, and, discovering a cousin of his engaged in a dust-yard, got employed through him at the same place, where he remains to the present day. This man was well clothed, he had good strong lace boots, gray worsted stockings, a stout pair of corduroy breeches, a short smockfrock and fantail. He has kept himself aloof, I am told, from the drunkenness and dissipation of the dustmen. He says that many of the new hands that get to dustwork are mechanics or people who have been "better off," and that these get thinking about what they have been, till to drown their care they take to drinking, and



often become, in the course of a year or so, worse than the "old hands" who have been reared to the business and have "nothing at all to think about."

Among the dustmen there is no "Society" nor "Benefit Club," specially devoted to the class—no provident institution whence they can obtain "relief" in the event of sickness or accident. The consequence is that, when ill or injured, they are obliged to obtain letters of admission to some of the hospitals, and there remain till cured. In cases of total incapacity for labour, their invariable refuge is the workhouse; indeed they look forward (whenever they foresee at all) to this asylum as their resting-place in old age, with the greatest equanimity, and talk of it as "the house" par excellence, or as "the big house," "the great house," or "the old house." There are, however, scattered about in every part of London numerous benefit clubs made up of working-men of every description, such as Old Friends, Odd Fellows, Foresters, and Birmingham societies, and with some one or other of these the better class of dustmen are connected. The general rule, however, is, that the men engaged in this trade belong to no benefit club whatever, and that in the season of their adversity they are utterly unprovided for, and consequently become burdens to the parishes wherein they happen to reside.

I visited a large dust-yard at the east end of London, for the purpose of getting a statement from one of the men. My informant was, at the time of my visit, shovelling the sifted soil from one of the lesser heaps, and, by a great effort of strength and activity, pitching each shovel-full to the top of a lofty mound, somewhat resembling a pyramid. Opposite to him stood a little woman, stoutly made, and with her arms bare above the elbow; she was his partner in the work, and was pitching shovel-full for shovel-full with him to the summit of the heap. She wore an old soiled cotton gown, open in front, and tucked up behind in the fashion of the last century. She had clouts of old rags tied round her ankles to prevent the dust from getting into her shoes, a sort of coarse towel fastened in front for an apron, and a red handkerchief bound tightly round her head. In this trim she worked away, and not only kept pace with the man, but often threw two shovels for his one, although he was a tall, powerful fellow. She smiled when she saw me noticing her, and seemed to continue her work with greater assiduity. I learned that she was deaf, and spoke so indistinctly that no stranger could understand her. She had also a defect in her sight, which latter circumstance had compelled her to abandon the sifting, as she could not well distinguish the various articles found in the dust-heap. The poor creature had therefore taken to the shovel, and now works with it every day, doing the labour of the strongest men.

From the man above referred to I obtained the following statement:—"Father vos a dustie;—vos at it all his life, and grandfather afore him for I can't tell how long. Father vos allus a rum 'un;—sich a beggar for lush. Why I'm blowed if he

wouldn't lush as much as half-a-dozen on 'em can lush now; somehow the dusties hasn't got the stuff in 'em as they used to have. A few year ago the fellers 'u'd think nothink o' lushing away for five or six days without niver going anigh their home. I niver vos at a school in all my life; I don't know what it's good for. It may be wery well for the likes o' you, but I doesn't know it 'u'd do a dustie any good. You see, ven I'm not out with the cart, I digs here all day; and p'raps I'm up all night, and digs away agen the next day. Vot does I care for reading, or anythink of that there kind, ven I gets home arter my vork? I tell you vot I likes, though! vhy, I jis likes two or three pipes o' baccor, and a pot or two of good heavy and a song, and then I tumbles in with my Sall, and I'm as happy as here and there von. That there Sall of mine's a stunner—a riglar stunner. There ain't never a voman can sift a heap quickerer nor my Sall. Sometimes she yarns as much as I does; the only thing is, she's sitch a beggar for lush, that there Sall of mine, and then she kicks up sitch jolly rows, you niver see the like in your life. That there's the only fault, as I know on, in Sall; but, barring that, she's a hout-and-houter, and worth a half-a-dozen of t' other sifters—pick 'em out vare you likes. No, we ain't married 'zactly, though it's all one for all that. I sticks to Sall, and Sall sticks to I, and there's an end on't:—vot is it to any von? I rec'lects a-picking the rags and things out of mother's sieve, when I were a young 'un, and a putting 'em all in the heap just as it might be there. I vos alius in a dust-yard. I don't think I could do no how in no other place. You see I wouldn't be 'appy like; I only knows how to vork at the dust 'cause I'm used to it, and so vos father afore me, and I'll stick to it as long as I can. I yarns about half-a-bull [2s. 6d.] a day, take one day with another. Sall sometimes yarns as much, and ven I goes out at night I yarns a bob or two more, and so I gits along pretty tidy; sometimes yarnin more and sometimes yarnin less. I niver vos sick as I knows on; I've been queerish of a morning a good many times, but I doesn't call that sickness; it's only the lush and nothink more. The smells nothink at all, ven you gits used to it. Lor' bless you! you'd think nothink on it in a veek's time,—no, no more ner I do. There's twenty on us vorks here—riglar. I don't think there's von on 'em 'cept Scratchey Jack can read, but he can do it stunning; he's out vith the cart now, but he's the chap as can patter to you as long as he likes."

Concerning the capital and income of the London dust business, the following estimate may be given as to the amount of property invested in and accruing to the trade.

It has been computed that there are 90 contractors, large and small; of these upwards of two-thirds, or about 35, may be said to be in a considerable way of business, possessing many carts and horses, as well as employing a large body of people; some yards have as many as 150 hands connected with them. The remaining 55 masters are composed of "small men," some of whom are

known as "running dustmen," that is to say, persons who collect the dust without any sanction from the parish; but the number belonging to this class has considerably diminished since the great deterioration in the price of "bricze." Assuming, then, that the great and little master dustmen employ on an average between six and seven carts each, we have the following statement as to the

#### CAPITAL OF THE LONDON DUST TRADE.

600 Carts, at 20 <i>l.</i> each . . .	£12,000
600 Horses, at 25 <i>l.</i> each . . .	15,000
600 Sets of harness, at 2 <i>l.</i> per set . . .	1,200
600 Ladders, at 5 <i>s.</i> each . . .	150
1200 Baskets, at 2 <i>s.</i> each . . .	120
1200 Shovels, at 2 <i>s.</i> each . . .	120

Being a total capital of . . . £23,500

If, therefore, we assert that the capital of this trade is between 25,000*l.* and 30,000*l.* in value, we shall not be far wrong either way.

Of the annual income of the same trade, it is almost impossible to arrive at any positive results; but, in the absence of all authentic information on the subject, we may make the subjoined conjecture.

#### INCOME OF THE LONDON DUST TRADE.

Sum paid to contractors for the removal of dust from the 176 metropolitan parishes, at 200 <i>l.</i> each parish . . .	£35,200
Sum obtained for 900,000 loads of dust, at 2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> per load . . .	112,500
	£147,700

Thus it would appear that the total income of the dust trade may be taken at between 145,000*l.* and 150,000*l.* per annum.

Against this we have to set the yearly outgoings of the business, which may be roughly estimated as follows:—

#### EXPENDITURE OF THE LONDON DUST TRADE.

Wages of 1800 labourers, at 10 <i>s.</i> a week each (including sifters and cartiers) . . .	£46,800
Keep of 600 horses, at 10 <i>s.</i> a week each . . .	15,600
Wear and tear of stock in trade . . .	4000
Rent for 90 yards, at 100 <i>l.</i> a year each (large and small) . . .	9000
	£75,400

The above estimates give us the following aggregate results:—

Total yearly incomings of the London dust trade . . .	£147,700
Total yearly out-goings . . .	75,400
Total yearly profit . . .	£72,300

Hence it would appear that the profits of the dust-contractors are very nearly at the rate of 16*o* per cent. on their expenditure. I do not

think I have over estimated the incomings, or under estimated the out-goings; at least I have striven to avoid doing so, in order that no injustice might be done to the members of the trade.

This aggregate profit, when divided among the 90 contractors, will make the clear gains of each master dustman amount to about 800*l.* per annum: of course some derive considerably more than this amount, and some considerably less.

#### OF THE LONDON SEWERAGE AND SCAVENGERY.

THE subject I have now to treat—principally as regards street-labour, but generally in its sanitary, social, and economical bearings—may really be termed vast. It is of the cleansing of a capital city, with its thousands of miles of streets and roads on the surface, and its thousands of miles of sewers and drains *under* the surface of the earth. And first let me deal with the subject in a historical point of view.

Public scavengery or street-cleansing, from the earliest periods of our history, since municipal authority regulated the internal economy of our cities, has been an object of some attention. In the records of all our civic corporations may be found bye-laws, or some equivalent measure, to enforce the cleansing of the streets. But these regulations were little enforced. It was ordered that the streets should be swept, but often enough men were not employed by the authorities to sweep them; until after the great fire of London, and in many parts for years after that, the tradesman's apprentice swept the dirt from the front of his master's house, and left it in the street, to be removed at the leisure of the scavenger. This was in the streets most famous for the wealth and commercial energy of the inhabitants. The streets inhabited by the poor, until about the beginning of the present century, were rarely swept at all. The unevenness of the pavement, the accumulation of wet and mud in rainy weather, the want of foot-paths, and sometimes even of grates and kennels, made Cowper, in one of his letters, describe a perambulation of some of these streets as "going by water."

Even this state of things was, however, an improvement. In the accounts of the London street-broils and fights, from the reign of Henry III., more especially during the war of the Roses, down to the civil war which terminated in the beheading of Charles I., mention is more or less made of the combatants having availed themselves of the shelter of the rubbish in the streets. These mounds of rubbish were then kinds of street-barricades, opposing the progress of passengers, like the piles of overturned omnibuses and other vehicles of the modern French street-combatants. There is no doubt that in the older times these mounds were composed, first, of the earth dug out for the foundation of some building, or the sinking of some well, or (later on) the formation of some drain; for these works were often long in hand, not only from the interruptions of civil strife and from want of funds, but from indifference, owing to the long delay in

their completion, and were often altogether abandoned. After dusk the streets of the capital of England could not be traversed without lanterns or torches. This was the case until the last 40 or 50 years in nearly all the smaller towns of England, but there the darkness was the principal obstacle; in the inferior parts of "Old London," however, there were the additional inconveniences of broken limbs and robbery.

It would be easy to adduce instances from the olden writers in proof of all the above statements, but it seems idle to cite proofs of what is known to all.

The care of the streets, however, as regards the removal of the dirt, or, as the weather might be, the dust and mud, seems never to have been much of a national consideration. It was left to the corporations and the parishes. Each of these had its own especial arrangements for the collection and removal of dirt in its own streets; and as each parochial or municipal system generally differed in some respect or other, taken as a whole, there was no one general mode or system adopted. To all this the street-management of our own days, in the respect of scavengery, and, as I shall show, of sewerage, presents a decided improvement. This improvement in street-management is not attributable to any public agitation—to any public, and, far less, national manifestation of feeling. It was debated sometimes in courts of Common Council, in ward and parochial meetings, but the public generally seem to have taken no express interest in the matter. The improvement seems to have established itself gradually from the improved tastes and habits of the people.

Although generally left to the local powers, the subject of street-cleansing and management, however, has not been entirely overlooked by Parliament. Among parliamentary enactments is the measure best known as "Michael Angelo Taylor's Act," passed early in the present century, which requires all householders every morning to remove from the front of their premises any snow which may have fallen during the night, &c., &c.; the late Police Acts also embrace subordinately the subject of street-management.

On the other hand the sewers have long been the object of national care. "The daily great damages and losses which have happened in many and divers parts of this realm" (I give the spirit of the preamble of several Acts of Parliament), "as well by the reason of the outrageous flowings, surges, and course of the river in and upon the marsh grounds and other low places, heretofore through public wisdom won and made profitable for the great commonwealth of this realm, as also by occasion of land waters and other outrageous springs in and upon meadows, pastures, and other low grounds adjoining to rivers, floods, and other water-courses," caused parliamentary attention to be given to the subject.

Until towards the latter part of the last century, however, the streets even of the better order were often flooded during heavy and continuous rains, owing to the sewers and drains having

been choked, so that the sewage forced its way through the gratings into the streets and yards, flooding all the underground apartments and often the ground floors of the houses, as well as the public thoroughfares with filth.

It is not many months since the neighbourhood of so modern a locality as Waterloo-bridge was flooded in this manner, and boats were used in the Belvidere and York-roads. On the 1st of August, 1846, after a tremendous storm of thunder, hail, and rain, miles of the capital were literally under water; hundreds of publicans' beer-cellars contained far more water than beer, and the damage done was enormous. These facts show that though much has been accomplished towards the efficient sewerage of the metropolis, much remains to be accomplished still.

The first statute on the subject of the public sewerage was as early as the 9th year of the reign of Henry III. There were enactments, also, in most of the succeeding reigns, but they were all partial and conflicting, and related more to local desiderata than to any system of sewerage for the public benefit, until the reign of Henry VIII., when the "Bill of Sewers" was passed (in 1531). This act provided for a more general system of sewerage in the cities and towns of the kingdom, requiring the main channels to be of certain depths and dimensions, according to the localities, situation, &c. In many parts of the country the sewerage is still carried on according to the provisions in the act of Henry VIII., but those provisions were modified, altered, or "explained," by many subsequent statutes.

Any uniformity which might have arisen from the observance of the same principles of sewerage was effectually checked by the measures adopted in London, more especially during the last 160 years. As the metropolis increased new sewerage became necessary, and new local bodies were formed for its management. These were known as the Commissions of Sewers, and the members of those bodies acted independently one of another, under the authority of their own Acts of Parliament, each having its own board, engineers, clerks, officers, and workmen. Each commission was confined to its own district, and did what was accounted best for its own district with little regard to any general plan of sewerage, so that London was, and in a great measure is, sewered upon different principles, as to the size of the sewers and drains, the rates of inclination, &c. &c. In 1847 there were eight of these districts and bodies: the City of London, the Tower Hamlets, Saint Katherine's, Poplar and Blackwall, Holborn and Finsbury, Westminster and part of Middlesex, Surrey and Kent, and Greenwich. In 1848 these several bodies were concentrated by act of parliament, and entitled the "Metropolitan Commission of Sewers;" but the City of London, as appears to be the case with every parliamentary measure affecting the metropolis, presents an exception, as it retains a separate jurisdiction, and is not under the control of the general commissioners, to whom parliament has given authority over such matters.

The management of the metropolitan sewerage

gery and sewerage, therefore, differs in this respect. The scavengery is committed to the care of the several parishes, each making its own contract; the sewerage is consigned by Parliament to a body of commissioners. In both instances, however, the expenses are paid out of local rates.

I shall now proceed to treat of each of these subjects separately, beginning with the cleansing of the streets.

#### OF THE STREETS OF LONDON.

THERE are now three modes of pavement in the streets of the metropolis.

1. *The stone pavement* (commonly composed of Aberdeen granite).
2. *The macadamized pavement*, or rather road.
3. *The wood pavement.*

The stone pavement has generally, in the several towns of England, been composed of whatever material the quarries or rocks of the neighbourhood supplied, limestone being often thus used. In some places, where there were no quarries available, the stones of a river or rivulet-side were used, but these were rounded and slippery, and often formed but a rugged pathway. For London pavement, the neighbourhood not being rich in stone quarries, granite has usually been brought by water from Scotland, and a small quantity from Guernsey for the pavement of the streets. The stone pavement is made by the placing of the granite stones, hewn and shaped ready for the purpose, side by side, with a foundation of concrete. The concrete now used for the London street-pavement is Thames ballast, composed of shingles, or small stones, and mixed with lime, &c.

Macadamization was not introduced into the streets of London until about 25 years ago. Before that, it had been carried to what was accounted a great degree of perfection on many of the principal mail and coach roads. Some 50 miles on the Great North Road, or that between London and Carlisle, were often pointed out as an admirable specimen of road-making on Mac Adam's principles. This road was well known in the old coaching days as Leming-lane, running from Boroughbridge to Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire.

The first thoroughfare in London which was macadamized, a word adapted from the name of Sir W. Mac Adam, the originator or great improver of the system, was St. James's-square; after that, some of the smaller streets in the aristocratic parishes of St. James and St. George were thus paved, and then, but not without great opposition, Piccadilly. The opposition to the macadamizing of the latter thoroughfare assumed many forms. Independently of the conflicting statements as to extravagance and economy, it was urged by the opponents, that the dust and dirt of the new style of paving would cause the street to be deserted by the aristocracy—that the noiselessness of the traffic would cause the deaths of the deaf and infirm—that the aristocracy promoted this new-fangled street-making, that they might the better "sleep o' nights," regardless of all else. One writer especially regretted that the Duke of Queensberry,

popularly known as "Old Q.," who resided at the western end of Piccadilly, had not lived to enjoy, undisturbed by vulgar noises, his bed of down, until it was his hour to rise and take his bath of perfumed milk! In short, there was all the fuss and absurdity which so often characterize local contests.

The macadamized street is made by a layer of stones, broken small and regular in size, and spread evenly over the road, so that the pressure and friction of the traffic will knead, grind, crush, and knit them into one compact surface. Until road-making became better understood, or until the early part of the present century, the roads even in the suburbs immediately connected with London, such as Islington, Kingsland, Stoke Newington, and Hackney, were "repaired when they wanted it." If there were a "rut," or a hole, it was filled up or covered over with stones, and as the drivers usually avoided such parts, for the sake of their horses' feet, another rut was speedily formed alongside of the original one. Under the old system, road-mending was patch-work; defects were sought to be remedied, but there was little or no knowledge of constructing or of reconstructing the surface as a whole.

The wood pavement came last, and was not established, even partially, until eleven or twelve years ago. One of the earliest places so paved was the Old Bailey, in order that the noise of the street-traffic might be deadened in the Criminal Courts. The same plan was adopted alongside some of the churches, and other public buildings, where external quietude, or, at any rate, diminished noise, was desired. At the first, there were great complaints made, and frequent expostulations addressed to the editors of the newspapers, as to the slipperiness of the wooden ways. The wood pavement is formed of blocks of wood, generally deal, fitted to one another by grooves, by joints, or by shape, for close adjustment. They are placed on the road over a body of concrete, in the same way as granite.

"In constructing roads, or rather streets, through towns or cities, where the amount of traffic is considerable, it will be found desirable," says Mr. Law, in his 'Treatise on the Constructing and Repairing of Roads,' "to pave their surface. The advantages belonging to pavements in such situations over macadamized roads are considerable; where the latter are exposed to an incessant and heavy traffic, their surface becomes rapidly worn, rendering constant repairs requisite, which are not only attended with very heavy expense, but also render the road very unpleasant for being travelled upon while being done; they also require much more attention in the way of scraping or sweeping, and in raking in ruts. And some difficulty would be experienced in towns to find places in which the materials, which would be constantly wanted for repairing the road, could be deposited. In dry weather the macadamized road would always be dusty, and in wet weather it would be covered with mud. The only advantage which such a road really possesses