Curious and ample as this Table of Refuse is—one, moreover, perfectly original—it is not sufficient, by the mere range of figures, to convey to the mind of the reader a full comprehension of the ramified vastness of the Second-Hand trade of the metropolis. Indeed tables are for reference more than for the current information to be yielded by a history or a narrative.

I will, therefore, offer a few explanations in elucidation, as it were, of the tabular return.

I must, as indeed I have done in the accompanying remarks, depart from the order of the details of the table to point out, in the first instance, the particulars of the greatest of the Second-Hand trades—that in Clothing. In this table the reader will find included every indispensable article of man's, woman's, and child's apparel, as well as those articles which add to the ornament or comfort of the person of the wearer; such as boas and victorines for the use of one sex, and dressing-gowns for the use of the other. The articles used to protect us from the rain, or the too-powerful rays of the sun, are also included—umbrellas and parasols. The whole of these articles exceed, when taken in round numbers, twelve millions and a quarter, and that reckoning the "pairs," as in boots and shoes, &c., as but one article. This, still pursuing the round-number system. would supply nearly *five* articles of refuse apparel to every man, woman, and child in this, the greatest metropolis of the world.

I will put this matter in another light. There are about 35,000 Jews in England, nearly half of whom reside in the metropolis. 12,000, it is further stated on good authority, reside within the City of London. Now at one time the trade in old clothes was almost entirely in the hands of the City Jews, the others prosecuting the same calling in different parts of London having been "Wardrobe Dealers," chiefly women, (who had not unfrequently been the servants of the aristocracy); and even these wardrobe dealers sold much that was worn, and (as one old clothes-dealer told me) much that was "not, for their fine customers, because the fashion had gone by," to the "Old Clo" Jews, or to those to whom the street-buyers carried their stock, and who were able to purchase on a larger scale than the general itinerants. Now, supposing that even one twelfth of these 12,000 Israelites were engaged in the old-clothes trade (which is far beyond the mark), each man would have *twelve hundred and twenty-five* articles to dispose of yearly, all second-hand!

Perhaps the most curious trade is that in waste paper, or as it is called by the street collectors, in "waste," comprising every kind of used or useless periodical, and books in all tongues. I may call the attention of my readers, by way of illustrating the extent of this business in what is proverbially refuse "waste paper," to their experience of the penny postage. Three or four sheets of note paper, according to the stouter or thinner texture, and an envelope with a seal or a glutinous and stamped fastening, will not exceed half-an-ounce, and is conveyed to the Orkneys and the further isles of Shetland, the Hebrides, the Scilly and Channel Islands, the isles of Achill and Cape Clear, off the western and southern coasts of Ireland, or indeed to and from the most extreme points of the United Kingdom, and no matter what distance, provided the letter be posted within the United Kingdom, for a penny. The weight of waste or refuse paper annually disposed of to the street collectors, or rather buyers, is 1,397,760 lbs. Were this tonnage, as I may call it, for it comprises 12,480 tons yearly, to be distributed in half-ounce letters, it would supply material, as respects weight, for *forty-four millions, seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand, four hundred and thirty* letters on business, love, or friendship.

I will next direct attention to what may be, by perhaps not over-straining a figure of speech, called "the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table;" or, according to the quality of the commodity of refuse, of the tables of the *comparatively* rich, and that down to a low degree of the scale. These are not, however, unappropriated crumbs, to be swept away uncared for; but are objects of keen traffic and bargains between the possessors or their servants and the indefatigable street-folk. Among them are such things as champagne and other wine bottles, porter and ale bottles, and, including the establishments of all the rich and the comparative rich, kitchen-stuff, dripping, hog-wash, hare-skins, and tea-leaves. Lastly come the very lowest grades of the street-folk—the *finders;* men who will quarrel, and have been seen to quarrel, with a hungry cur for a street-found bone; not to pick or gnaw, although Eugène Sue has seen that done in Paris; and I once, very early on a summer's morning, saw some apparently houseless Irish children contend with a dog and with each other for bones thrown out of a house in King William-street, City—as if after a very late supper—not to pick or gnaw, I was saying, but to *sell* for manure. Some of these finders have "seen better days;" others, in intellect, are little elevated above the animals whose bones they gather, or whose ordure ("pure"), they scrape into their baskets.

I do not know that the other articles in the arrangement of the table of street refuse, &c., require any further comment. Broken metal, &c., can only be disposed of according to its quality or weight, and I have lately shown the extent of the trade in such refuse as street-sweepings, soot, and night-soil.

The gross total, or average yearly money value, is 1,406,592*l.* for the second-hand commodities I have described in the foregoing pages; or as something like a minimum is given, both as to the number of the goods and the price, we may fairly put this total at a million and a half of pounds sterling!

CROSSING-SWEEPERS.

THAT portion of the London street-folk who earn a scanty living by sweeping crossings constitute a large class of the Metropolitan poor. We can scarcely walk along a street of any extent, or pass through a square of the least pretensions to "gentility," without meeting one or more of these private scavengers. Crossing-sweeping seems to be one of those occupations which are resorted to as an excuse for begging; and, indeed, as many expressed it to me, "it was the last chance left of obtaining an honest crust."

The advantages of crossing-sweeping as a means of livelihood seem to be:

1st, the smallness of the capital required in order to commence the business;

2ndly, the excuse the apparent occupation it affords for soliciting gratuities without being considered in the light of a street-beggar;

And 3rdly, the benefits arising from being constantly seen in the same place, and thus exciting the sympathy of the neighbouring householders, till small weekly allowances or "pensions" are obtained.

The first curious point in connexion with this subject is what constitutes the "*property*," so to speak, in a crossing, or the *right* to sweep a pathway across a certain thoroughfare. A nobleman, who has been one of her Majesty's Ministers, whilst conversing with me on the subject of crossing-sweepers, expressed to me the curiosity he felt on the subject, saying that he had noticed some of the sweepers in the same place for years. "What were the rights of property," he asked, "in such cases, and what constituted the title that such a man had to a particular crossing? Why did not the stronger sweeper supplant the weaker? Could a man bequeath a crossing to a son, or present it to a friend? How did he first obtain the spot?"

The answer is, that crossing-sweepers are, in a measure, under the protection of the police. If the accommodation afforded by a well-swept pathway is evident, the policeman on that district will protect the original sweeper of the crossing from the intrusion of a rival. I have, indeed, met with instances of men who, before taking to a crossing, have asked for and obtained permission of the police; and one sweeper, who gave me his statement, had even solicited the authority of the inhabitants before he applied to the inspector at the station-house.

If a crossing have been vacant for some time, another sweeper may take to it; but should the original proprietor again make his appearance, the officer on duty will generally re-establish him. One man to whom I spoke, had fixed himself on a crossing which for years another sweeper had kept clean on the Sunday morning only. A dispute ensued; the one claimant pleading his long Sabbath possession, and the other his continuous every-day service. The quarrel was referred to the police, who decided that he who was oftener on the ground was the rightful owner; and the option was given to the former possessor, that if he would sweep there every day the crossing should be his.

I believe there is only one crossing in London which is in the gift of a householder, and this proprietorship originated in a tradesman having, at his own expense, caused a paved footway to be laid down over the Macadamized road in front of his shop, so that his customers might run less chance of dirtying their boots when they crossed over to give their orders.

Some bankers, however, keep a crossing-sweeper, not only to sweep a clean path for the "clients" visiting their house, but to open and shut the doors of the carriages calling at the house.

Concerning the *causes which lead or drive* people to this occupation, they are various. People take to crossing-sweeping either on account of their bodily afflictions, depriving them of the power of performing ruder work, or because the occupation is the last resource left open to them of earning a living, and they considered even the scanty subsistence it yields preferable to that of the workhouse. The greater proportion of crossing-sweepers are those who, from some bodily infirmity or injury, are prevented from a more laborious mode of obtaining their living. Among the bodily infirmities the chief are old age, asthma, and rheumatism; and the injuries mostly consist of loss of limbs. Many of the rheumatic sweepers have been bricklayers' labourers.

The classification of crossing-sweepers is not very complex. They may be divided into the *casual* and the *regular*.

By the casual I mean such as pursue the occupation only on certain days in the week, as, for instance, those who make their appearance on the Sunday morning, as well as the boys who, broom in hand, travel about the streets, sweeping before the foot-passengers or stopping an hour at one place, and then, if not fortunate, moving on to another.

The regular crossing-sweepers are those who have taken up their posts at the corners of streets or squares; and I have met with some who have kept to the same spot for more than forty years.

The crossing-sweepers in the squares may be reckoned among the most fortunate of the class. With them the crossing is a kind of stand, where any one requiring their services knows they may be found. These sweepers are often employed by the butlers and servants in the neighbouring mansions for running errands, posting letters, and occasionally helping in the packing-up and removal of furniture or boxes when the family goes out of town. I have met with other sweepers who, from being known for years to the inhabitants, have at last got to be regularly employed at some of the houses to clean knives, boots, windows, &c.

It is not at all an unfrequent circumstance, however, for a sweeper to be in receipt of a weekly sum from some of the inhabitants in the district. The crossing itself is in these cases but of little value for chance customers, for were it not for the regular charity of the householders, it would be deserted. Broken victuals and old clothes also form part of a sweeper's means of living; nor are the clothes always old ones, for one or two of this class have for years been in the habit of having new suits presented to them by the neighbours at Christmas.

The irregular sweepers mostly consist of boys and girls who have formed themselves into a kind of company, and come to an agreement to work together on the same crossings. The principal resort of these is about Trafalgar-square, where they have seized upon some three or four crossings, which they visit from time to time in the course of the day.

One of these gangs I found had appointed its king and captain, though the titles were more honorary than privileged. They had framed their own laws respecting each one's right to the money he took, and the obedience to these laws was enforced by the strength of the little fraternity.

One or two girls whom I questioned, told me that they mixed up ballad-singing or lace-selling with crossing-sweeping, taking to the broom only when the streets were wet and muddy. These children are usually sent out by their parents, and have to carry home at night their earnings. A few of them are orphans with a lodging-house for a home.

Taken as a class, crossing-sweepers are among the most honest of the London poor. They all tell you that, without a good character and "the respect of the neighbourhood," there is not a living to be got out of the broom. Indeed, those whom I found best-to-do in the world were those who had been longest at their posts.

Among them are many who have been servants until sickness or accident deprived them of their situations, and nearly all of them have had their minds so subdued by affliction, that they have been tamed so as to be incapable of mischief.

The *earnings*, or rather "*takings*," of crossing-sweepers are difficult to estimate—generally speaking—that is, to strike the average for the entire class. An erroneous idea prevails that crossing-sweeping is a lucrative employment. All whom I have spoken with agree in saying, that some thirty years back it was a good living; but they bewail piteously the spirit of the present generation. I have met with some who, in former days, took their 3*l*. weekly; and there are but few I have spoken to who would not, at one period, have considered fifteen shillings a bad week's work. But now "the takings" are very much reduced. The man who was known to this class as having been the most prosperous of all—for from one nobleman alone he received an allowance of seven shillings and sixpence weekly—assured me that twelve shillings a-week was the average of his present gains, taking the year round; whilst the majority of the sweepers agree that a shilling is a good day's earnings.

A shilling a-day is the very limit of the average incomes of the London sweepers, and this is rather an over than an under calculation; for, although a few of the more fortunate, who are to be found in the squares or main thoroughfares or opposite the public buildings, may earn their twelve or fifteen shillings a-week, yet there are hundreds who are daily to be found in the by-streets of the metropolis who assert that eightpence a-day is their average taking; and, indeed, in proof of their poverty, they refer you to the workhouse authorities, who allow them certain quartern-loaves weekly. The old stories of delicate suppers and stockings full of money have in the present day no foundation of truth.

The black crossing-sweeper, who bequeathed 500*l*. to Miss Waithman, would almost seem to be the last of the class whose earnings were above his positive necessities.

Lastly, concerning the *numbers* belonging to this large class, we may add that it is difficult to reckon up the number of crossing-sweepers in London. There are few squares without a couple of these pathway scavengers; and in the more respectable squares, such as Cavendish or Portman, every corner has been seized upon. Again, in the principal thoroughfares, nearly every street has its crossing and attendant.

I.—OF THE ADULT CROSSING-SWEEPERS.

A. The Able-Bodied Sweepers.

The elder portion of the London crossing-sweepers admit, as we have before said, of being arranged, for the sake of perspicuity, into several classes. I shall begin with the *Able-bodied Males;* then proceed to the *Females* of the same class; and afterwards deal with the *Able-bodied Irish* (male and female), who take to the London causeways for a living. This done, I shall then, in due order, take up the *Afflicted* or *Crippled* class; and finally treat of the *Juveniles* belonging to the same calling.

1. The Able-Bodied Male Crossing-Sweepers.

The "Aristocratic" Crossing-Sweeper.

"Billy" is the popular name of the man who for many years has swept the long crossing that cuts off one corner of Cavendish-square, making a "short cut" from Old Cavendish-street to the Duke of Portland's mansion.

Billy is a merry, good-tempered kind of man, with a face as red as a love-apple, and cheeks streaked with little veins.

"His hair is white, and his eyes are as black and bright as a terrier's. He can hardly speak a sentence without finishing it off with a moist chuckle.

His clothes have that peculiar look which arises from being often wet through, but still they are decent, and far above what his class usually wear. The hat is limp in the brim, from being continually touched.

The day when I saw Billy was a wet one, and he had taken refuge from a shower under the Duke of Portland's stone gateway. His tweed coat, torn and darned, was black about the shoulders with the rain-drops, and his boots grey with mud, but, he told me, "It was no good trying to keep clean shoes such a day as that, 'cause the blacking come off in the puddles."

Billy is "well up" in the *Court Guide*. He continually stopped in his statement to tell whom my Lord B. married, or where my Lady C. had gone to spend the summer, or what was the title of the Marquis So-and-So's eldest boy.

He was very grateful, moreover, to all who had assisted him, and *would* stop looking up at the ceiling, and God-blessing them all with a species of religious fervour.

His regret that the good old times had passed, when he made "hats full of money," was unmistakably sincere; and when he had occasion to allude to them, he always delivered his opinion upon the late war, calling it "a-cut-and run affair," and saying that it was "nothing at all put alongside with the old war, when the halfpence and silver coin were twice as big and twenty times more plentiful" than during the late campaign.

Without the least hesitation he furnished me with the following particulars of his life and calling:—

"I was born in London, in Cavendish-square, and (he added, laughing) I ought to have a title, for I first came into the world at No. 3, which was Lord Bessborough's then. My mother went there to do her work, for she chaired there, and she was took sudden and couldn't go no further. She couldn't have chosen a better place, could she? You see I was born in Cavendish-square, and I've *worked* in Cavendish-square—sweeping a crossing—for now near upon fifty year.

"Until I was nineteen—I'm sixty-nine now—I used to sell water-creases, but they felled off and then I dropped it. Both mother and myself sold water-creases after my Lord Bessborough died; for whilst he lived she wouldn't leave him not for nothing.

"We used to do uncommon well at one time; there wasn't nobody about then as there is now. I've sold flowers, too; they was very good then; they was mostly show carnations and moss roses, and such-like, but no common flowers—it wouldn't have done for me to sell common things at the houses I used to go to.

"The reason why I took to a crossing was, I had an old father and I didn't want him to go to the workus. I didn't wish too to do anything bad myself, and I never would—no, sir, for I've got as good a charackter as the first nobleman in the land, and that's a fine thing, ain't it? So as water-creases had fell off till they wasn't a living to me, I had to do summat else to help me to live.

"I saw the crossing-sweepers in Westminster making a deal of money, so I thought to myself *I'll* do that, and I fixed upon Cavendish-square, because, I said to myself, I'm known there; it's where I was born, and there I set to work.

"The very first day I was at work I took ten shillings. I never asked nobody; I only bowed my head and put my hand to my hat, and they knowed what it meant.

"By jingo, when I took that there I thought to myself, What a fool I've been to stop at water-creases!

"For the first ten year I did uncommon well. Give me the old-fashioned way; they were good times then; I like the old-fashioned way. Give me the old penny pieces, and then the eighteen-penny pieces, and the three-shilling pieces, and the seven-shilling pieces—give me them, I says. The day the old halfpence and silver was cried down, that is, the old coin was called in to change the currency, my hat wouldn't hold the old silver and halfpence I was give that afternoon. I had *such* a lot, upon my word, they broke my pocket. I didn't know the money was altered, but a fishmonger says to me, 'Have you got any old silver?' I said 'Yes, I've got a hat full;' and then says he, 'Take 'em down to Couttseses and change 'em.' I went, and I was nearly squeeged to death.

"That was the first time I was like to be killed, but I was nigh killed again when Queen Caroline passed through Cavendish-square after her trial. They took the horses out of her carriage and pulled her along. She kept a chucking money out of the carriage, and I went and scrambled for it, and I got five-and-twenty shillin, but my hand was a nigh smashed through it; and, says a friend of mine, before I went, 'Billy,' says he, 'don't you go;' and I was sorry after I did. She was a good woman, *she* was. The Yallers, that is, the king's party, was agin her, and pulled up the paving-stones when her funeral passed; but the Blues was for her.

"I can remember, too, the mob at the time of the Lord Castlereagh riots. They went to Portman-square and broke all the winders in the house. They pulled up all the rails to purtect theirselves with. I went to the Bishop of Durham's, and hid myself in the coal-cellar then. My mother chaired there, too. The Bishop of Durham and Lord Harcourt opened their gates and hurrah'd the mob, so they had nothing of their's touched; but whether they did it through fear or not I can't say. The mob was carrying a quartern loaf dipped in bullock's blood, and when I saw it I thought it was a man's head; so that frightened me, and I run off.

"I remember, too, when Lady Pembroke's house was burnt to the ground. That's about eighteen year ago. It was very lucky the family wasn't in town. The housekeeper was a nigh killed, and they had to get her out over the stables; and when her ladyship heard she was all right, she said she didn't care for the fire since the old dame was saved, for she had lived along with the family for many years. No, bless you, sir! I didn't help at the fire; I'm too much of a coward to do that.

"All the time the Duke of Portland was alive he used to allow me 7*s.* 6*d.* a-week, which was 1*s.* a-day and 1*s.* 6*d.* for Sundays. He was a little short man, and a very good man he was too, for it warn't only me as he gave money to, but to plenty others. He was the best man in England for that.

"Lord George Bentinck, too, was a good friend to me. He was a great racer, he was, and then he turned to be member of parliament, and then he made a good man they tell me; but he never comed over my crossing without giving me something. He was at the corner of Holly Street, he was, and he never put foot on my crossing without giving me a sovereign. Perhaps he wouldn't cross more than once or twice a month, but when he comed my way *that* was his money. Ah! he was a nice feller, he was. When he give it he always put it in my hand and never let nobody see it, and that's the way I like to have *my* fee give me.

"There's Mrs. D——, too, as lived at No. 6; she was a good friend of mine, and always allowed me a suit of clothes a-year; but she's dead, good lady, now.

"Dr. C—— and his lady, they, likewise, was very kind friends of mine, and gave me every year clothes, and new shoes, and blankets, aye, and a bed, too, if I had wanted it; but now they are all dead, down to the coachman. The doctor's old butler, Mr. K——, he gave me twenty-five shillings the day of the funeral, and, says he, 'Bill, I'm afraid this will be the last.' Poor good friends they was all of them, and I did feel cut up when I see the hearse going off.

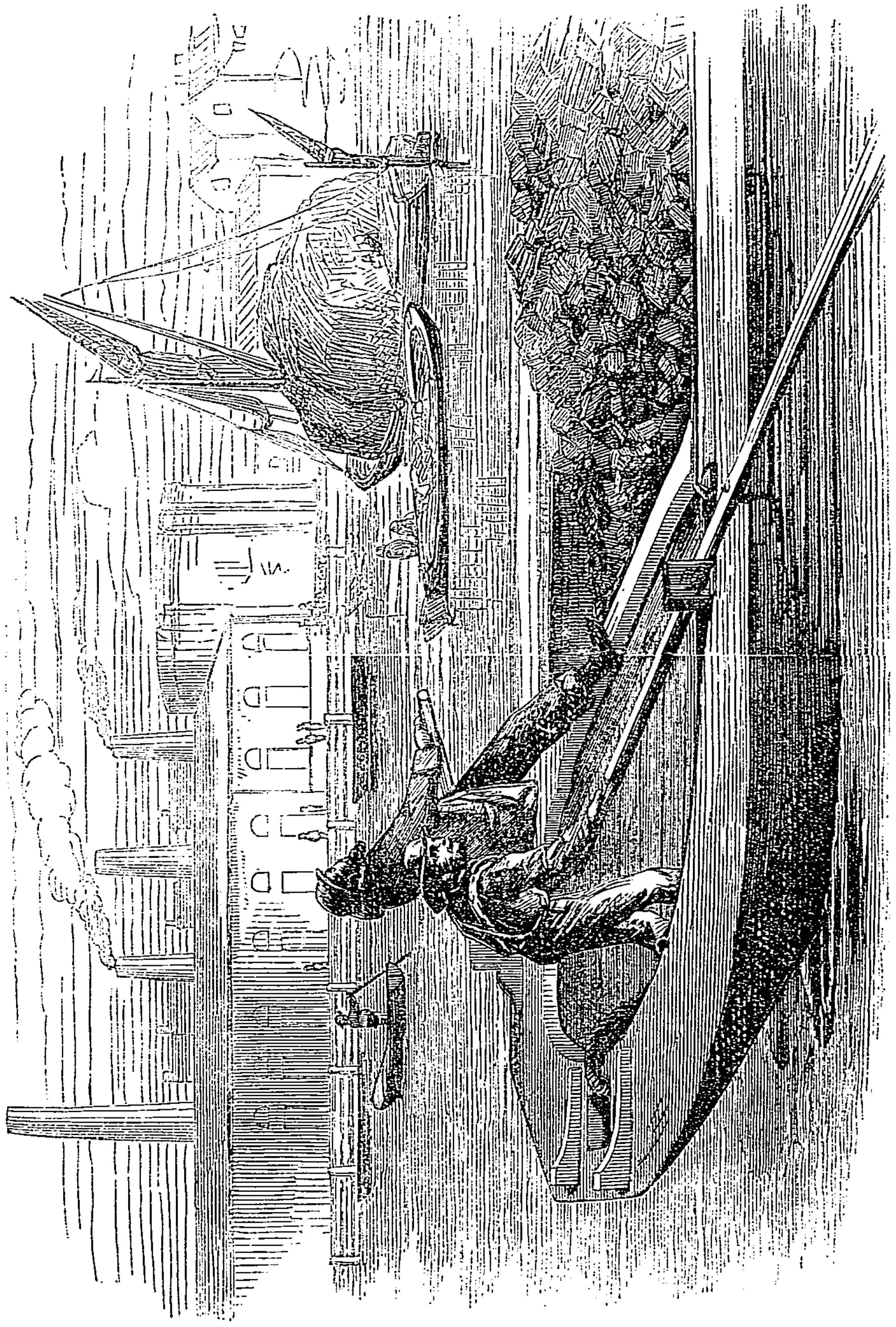
"There was another gentleman, Mr. W. T——, who lives in Harley-street; he never come by me without giving me half-a-crown. He was a real good gentleman; but I haven't seen him for a long time now, and perhaps he's dead too.

"All my friends is dropping off. I'm fifty five, and they was men when I was a boy. All the good gentlemen's gone, only the bad ones stop.

"Another friend of mine is Lord B——. He always drops me a shilling when he come by; and, says he, 'You don't know me, but I knows you, Billy.' But I *do* know him, for my mother worked for the family many a year, and, considering I was born in the house, I think to myself, 'If I don't know you, why I ought.' He's a handsome, stout young chap, and as nice a gentleman as any in the land.

"One of the best friends I had was Prince E——, as lived there in Chandos-street, the bottom house yonder. I had five sovereigns give me the day as he was married to his beautiful wife. Don't you remember what a talk there was about her diamonds, sir? They say she was kivered in 'em. He used to put his hand in his pocket and give me two or three shillings every time he crossed. He was a gentleman as was uncommon fond of the gals, sir. He'd go and talk to all the maid-servants round about, if they was only good-looking. I used to go and ring the hairy bells for him, and tell the gals to go and meet him in Chapel-street. God bless him! I says, he was a pleasant gentleman, and a regular good 'un for a bit of fun, and always looking lively and smiling. I see he's got his old coachman yet, though the Prince don't live in England at present, but his son does, and he always gives me a half-crown when he comes by too.

"I gets a pretty fine lot of Christmas boxes, but nothing like what I had in the old times. Prince E—— always gives me half a crown, and I goes to the butler for it. Pretty near all my friends gives me a box, them as knows



THAMES LIGHTERMEN.

[*From a Sketch.*]

me, and they say, 'Here's a Christmas box, Billy.'

"Last Christmas-day I took 30*s.*, and that was pretty fair; but, bless you, in the old times I've had my hat full of money. I tells you again I've have had as much as 5*l.* in old times, all in old silver and halfpence; that was in the old war, and not this runaway shabby affair.

"Every Sunday I have sixpence regular from Lord H——, whether he's in town or not. I goes and fetches it. Mrs. D——, of Harley-street, she gives me a shilling every Sunday when she's in town; and the parents as knows me give halfpence to their little girls to give me. Some of the little ladies says, 'Here, that will do you good.' No, it's only pennies (for sixpences is out of fashion); and thank God for the coppers, though they are little.

"I generally, when the people's out of town, take about 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* on the Sunday. Last Sunday I only took 1*s.* 3*d.*, but then, you see, it come on to rain and I didn't stop. When the town's full three people alone gives me more than that. In the season I take 5*s.* safe on a Sunday, or perhaps 6*s.*—for you see it's all like a lottery.

"I should like you to mention Lady Mildmay in Grosvenor-square, sir. Whenever I goes to see her—but you know I don't go often—I'm safe for 5*s.*, and at Christmas I have my regular salary, a guinea. She's a very old lady, and I've knowed her for many and many years. When I goes to my lady she always comes out to speak to me at the door, and says she, 'Oh, 'tis Willy! and how do you do, Willy?' and she always shakes hands with me and laughs away. Ah! she's a good kind creetur'; there's no pride in her whatsumever—and she never sacks her servants.

"My crossing has been a good living to me and mine. It's kept the whole of us. Ah! in the old time I dare say I've made as much as 3*l.* a week reg'lar by it. Besides, I used to have lots of broken vittals, and I can tell you I know'd where to take 'em to. Ah! I've had as much food as I could carry away, and reg'lar good stuff—chicken, and some things I couldn't guess the name of, they was so Frenchified. When the fam'lies is in town I gets a good lot of food given me, but you know when the nobility and gentlemen are away the servants is on board wages, and cuss them board wages, I says.

"I buried my father and mother as a son ought to. Mother was seventy-three and father was sixty-five,—good round ages, ain't they, sir? I shall never live to be that. They are lying in St. John's Wood cemetery along with many of my brothers and sisters, which I have buried as well. I've only two brothers living now; and, poor fellows, they're not very well to do. It cost me a good bit of money. I pay 2*s.* 6*d.* a-year for keeping up the graves of each of my parents, and 1*s.* 2*d.* for my brothers.

"There was the Earl of Gainsborough as I should like you to mention as well, please sir. He lived in Chandos-street, and was a particular nice man and very religious. He always gave me a shilling and a tract. Well, you see, I *did* often read the tract; they was all religious, and about where your souls was to go to—very good, you know, what there was, very good; and he used to buy 'em wholesale at a little shop, corner of High-street, Marrabun. He was a very good, kind gentleman, and gave away such a deal of money that he got reg'lar known, and the little beggar girls follered him at such a rate that he was at last forced to ride about in a cab to get away from 'em. He's many a time said to me, when he's stopped to give me my shilling, 'Billy, is any of 'em a follering me?' He was safe to give to every body as asked him, but you see it worried his soul out—and it was a kind soul, too—to be follered about by a mob.

"When all the fam'lies is in town I has 14*s.* a-week reg'lar as clock-work from my friends as lives round the square, and when they're away I don't get 6*d.* a-day, and sometimes I don't get 1*d.* a-day, and that's less. You see some of 'em, like my Lord B——, is out eight months in the year; and some of 'em, such as my Lord H——, is only three. Then Mrs. D——, she's away three months, and she always gives 1*s.* a-week reg'lar when she's up in London.

"I don't take 4*s.* a-week on the crossing. Ah! I wish you'd give me 4*s.* for what I take. No, I make up by going of errands. I runs for the fam'lies, and the servants, and any of 'em. Sometimes they sends me to a banker's with a cheque. Bless you! they'd trust me with anythink, if it was a hat full. I've had a lot of money trusted to me at times. At one time I had as much as 83*l.* to carry for the Duke of Portland.

"Aye, that was a go—*that* was! You see the hall-porter had had it give to him to carry to the bank, and he gets me to do it for him; but the vallet heerd of it, so he wanted to have a bit of fun, and he wanted to put the hall-porter in a funk. I met the vallet in Holborn, and says he, 'Bill, I want to have a lark,' so he kept me back, and I did not get back till one o'clock. The hall-porter offered 5*l.* reward for me, and sends the police; but Mr. Freebrother, Lord George's wallet, he says, 'I'll make it all right, Billy.' They sent up to my poor old people, and says father, 'Billy wouldn't rob anybody of a nightcap, much more 80*l.*' I met the policeman in Holborn, and says he, 'I want you, Billy,' and says I, 'All right, here I am.' When I got home the hall-porter, says he, 'Oh, I am a dead man; where's the money?' and says I, 'It's lost.' 'Oh! it's the Duke's, not mine,' says he. Then I pulls it out; and says the porter, 'It's a lark of Freebrother's.' So he gave me 2*l.*

to make it all right. That *was* a game, and the hall-porter, says he, 'I really thought you was gone, Billy;' but, says I, 'If everybody carried as good a face as I do, everybody would be as honest as any in Cavendish-square.'

"I had another lark at the Bishop of Durham's. I was a cleaning the knives, and a swellmobsman, with a green-baize bag, come down the steps, and says he to me, 'Is Mr. Lewis, the butler, in?—he'd got the name off quite pat. 'No,' says I, 'he's up-stairs;' then says he, 'Can I step into the pantry?' 'Oh, yes,' says I, and shows him in. Bless you! he was so well-dressed, I thought he was a master-shoemaker or something; but as all the plate was there, thinks I, I'll just lock the door to make safe. So I fastens him in tight, and keeps him there till Mr. Lewis comes. No, he didn't take none of the plate, for Mr. Lewis come down, and then, as he didn't know nothink about him, we had in a policeman, when we finds his bag was stuffed with silver tea-pots and all sorts of things from my Lord Musgrave's. Says Mr. Lewis, 'You did quite right, Billy.' It wasn't a likely thing I was going to let anybody into a pantry crammed with silver.

"There was another chap who had prigged a lot of plate. He was an old man, and had a bag crammed with silver, and was a cutting away, with lots of people after him. So I puts my broom across his legs and tumbles him, and when he got up he cut away and left the bag. Ah! I've seen a good many games in my time—that I have. The butler of the house the plate had been stole from give me 2*l.* for doing him that turn.

"Once a gentleman called me, and says he, 'My man, how long have you been in this square?' Says I, 'I'm Billy, and been here a'most all my life.' Then he says, 'Can I trust you to take a cheque to Scott, the banker?' and I answers, 'That's as you like,' for I wasn't going to press him. It was a heavy cheque, for Mr. Scott. as knows me well—aye, well, he do—says 'Billy, I can't give you all in notes, you must stop a bit.' It nearly filled the bag I had with me. I took it all safe back, and says he, 'Ah! I knowed it would be all right,' and he give me a half-sovereign. I should like you to put these things down, 'cos it's a fine thing for my charackter, and I can show my face with any man for being honest, that's one good thing.

"I pays 4*s.* a-week for two rooms, one up and one down, for I couldn't live in one room. I come to work always near eight o'clock, for you see it takes me some time to clean the knives and boots at Lord B——'s. I get sometimes 1*s.* and sometimes 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week for doing that, and glad I am to have it. It's only for the servants I does it, not for the quality.

"When I does anythink for the servants, it's either cleaning boots and knives, or putting letters in the post—that's it—anythink of that kind. They gives me just what they can, 1*d.* or 2*d.* or half a pint of beer when they ha'n't got any coppers.

"Sometimes I gets a few left-off clothes, but very seldom. I have two suits a-year give me reg'lar, and I goes to a first-rate tailor for 'em, though they don't make the prime—of course not, yet they're very good. Now this coat I liked very well when it was new, it was so clean and tidy. No, the tailor don't show me the pattern-books and that sort of thing: he knows what's wanted. I won't never have none of them washing duck breeches; that's the only thing as I refuses, and the tailor knows that. I looks very nice after Christmas, I can tell you, and I've always got a good tidy suit for Sundays, and God bless them as gives 'em to me.

"Every Sunday I gets a hot dinner at Lord B——'s, whether he's out of town or in town—that's summat. I gets bits, too, give me, so that I don't buy a dinner, no, not once a-week. I pays 4*s.* a-week rent, and I dare say my food, morning and night, costs me a 1*s.* a-day—aye, I'm sure it does, morning and night. At present I don't make 12*s.* a-week; but take the year round, one week with another, it might come to 13*s.* or 14*s.* a-week I gets. Yes, I'll own to that.

"Christmas is my best time; then I gets more than 1*l.* a-week: now I don't take 4*s.* a-week on my crossing. Many's the time I've made my breakfast on a pen'orth of coffee and a halfpenny slice of bread and butter. What do you think of that?

"Wet weather does all the harm to me. People, you see, don't like to come out. I think I've got the best side of the square, and you see my crossing is a long one, and saves people a deal of ground, for it cuts off the corner. It used to be a famous crossing in its time—hah! but that's gone.

"I always uses what they calls the brush-brooms; that's them with a flat head like a house-broom. I can't abide them others; they don't look well, and they wears out ten times as quick as mine. I general buys the eights, that's 10*d.* a-piece, and finds my own handles. A broom won't last me more than a fortnight, it's such a long crossing; but when it was paved, afore this mucky dam (macadamising) was turned up, a broom would last me a full three months. I can't abide this muckydam—can you, sir? it's sloppy stuff, and goes so bad in holes. Give me the good solid stones as used to be.

"I does a good business round the square when the snow's on the ground. I general does each house at so much a-week whilst it snows. Hardwicks give me a shilling. I does only my side, and that next Oxford-street. I don't go to the others, unless somebody comes and orders me—for fair play *is* fair play—and they belongs to the other sweepers. I does my part and they does theirs.

"It's seldom as I has a shop to sweep out, and I don't do nothink with shutters. I'm getting too old now for to be called in to carry boxes up gentlemen's houses, but when I was young I found plenty to do that way. There's a man at the corner of Chandos-street, and he does the most of that kind of work."

The Bearded Crossing-Sweeper at the Exchange.

Since the destruction by fire of the Royal Exchange in 1838, there has been added to the curiosities of Cornhill a thickset, sturdy, and hirsute crossing-sweeper—a man who is as civil by habit as he is independent by nature. He has a long flowing beard, grey as wood smoke, and a pair of fierce moustaches, giving a patriarchal air of importance to a marked and observant face, which often serves as a painter's model. After half-an-hour's conversation, you are forced to admit that his looks do not all belie him, and that the old mariner (for such was his profession formerly) is worthy in some measure of his beard.

He wears an old felt hat—very battered and discoloured; around his neck, which is bared in accordance with sailor custom, he has a thick blue cotton neckerchief tied in a sailor's knot; his long iron-grey beard is accompanied by a healthy and almost ruddy face. He stands against the post all day, saying nothing, and taking what he can get without solicitation.

When I first spoke to him, he wanted to know to what purpose I intended applying the information that he was prepared to afford, and it was not until I agreed to walk with him as far as St. Mary-Axe that I was enabled to obtain his statement, as follows:—

"I've had this crossing ever since '38. The Exchange was burnt down in that year. Why, sir, I was wandering about trying to get a crust, and it was very sloppy, so I took and got a broom; and while I kept a clean crossing, I used to get ha'pence and pence. I got a dockman's wages—that's half-a-crown a-day; sometimes only a shilling, and sometimes more. I have taken a crown—but that's very rare. The best customers I had is dead. I used to make a good Christmas, but I don't now. I have taken a pound or thirty shillings then in the old times.

"I smoke, sir; I *will* have tobacco, if I can't get grub. My old woman takes cares that I have tobacco.

"I have been a sailor, and the first ship as ever I was in was the Old Colossus, 74, but we was only cruising about the Channel then, and took two prizes. I went aboard the Old Remewa guardship — we were turned over to her—and from her I was drafted over to the Escramander frigate. We went out chasing Boney, but he gived himself up to the Old Impregnable. I was at the taking of Algiers, in 1816, in the Superb. I was in the Rochfort, 74, up the Mediterranean (they call it up the Mediterranean, but it was the Malta station) three years, ten months, and twenty days, until the ship was paid off.

"Then I went to work at the Dockyard. I had a misfortune soon after that. I fell out of a garret window, three stories high, and that kept me from going to the Docks again. I lost all my top teeth by that fall. I've got a scar here, one on my chin; but I warn't in the hospital more than two weeks.

"I was afeard of being taken up solicitin' charity, and I knew that sweeping was a safe game; they couldn't take me up for sweeping a crossing.

"Sometimes I get insulted, only in words; sometimes I get chaffed by sober people. Drunken men I don't care for; I never listen to 'em, unless they handle me, and then, although I am sixty-three this very day, sir, I think I could show them something. I *do* carry my age well; and if you could ha' seen how I have lived this last winter through, sometimes one pound of bread between two of us, you'd say I was a strong man to be as I am.

"Those who think that sweepin' a crossing is idle work, make a great mistake. In wet weather, the traffic that makes it gets sloppy as soon as it's cleaned. Cabs, and 'busses, and carriages continually going over the crossing must scatter the mud on it, and you must look precious sharp to keep it clean; but when I once get in the road, I never jump out of it. I keeps my eye both ways, and if I gets in too close quarters, I slips round the wheels. I've had them almost touch me.

"No, sir, I never got knocked down. In foggy weather, of course, it's no use sweeping at all.

"Parcels! it's very few parcels I get to carry now; I don't think I get a parcel to carry once in a month: there's 'busses and railways so cheap. A man would charge as much for a distance as a cab would take them.

"I don't come to the same crossing on Sundays; I go to the corner of Finch-lane. As to regular customers, I've none—to say regular; some give me sixpence now and then. All those who used to give me regular are dead.

"I was a-bed when the Exchange was burnt down.

"I have had this beard five years. I grew it to sit to artists when I got the chance; but it don't pay expenses—for I have to walk four or five miles, and only get a shilling an hour: besides, I'm often kept nearly two hours, and I get nothing for going and nothing for coming, but just for the time I am there.

"Afore I wore it, I had a pair of large whiskers. I went to a gentleman then, an artist, and he *did* pay me well. He advised me to grow mustarshers and the beard, but he hasn't employed me since.

“They call me ‘Old Jack’ on the crossing, that's all they call me. I get more chaff from the boys than any one else. “They only say, ‘Why don't you get shaved?’ but I take no notice on 'em.

“Old Bill, in Lombard Street! I knows him; he used to make a good thing of it, but I don't think he makes much now.

“My wife—I am married, sir—doesn't do anything. I live in a lodging-house, and I pay three shillings a-week.

“I tell you what we has, now, when I go home. We has a pound of bread, a quarter of an ounce of tea, and perhaps a red herring.

“I've had a weakness in my legs for two year; the veins comes down, but I keep a bandage in my pocket, and when I feels 'em coming down, I puts the bandage on 'till the veins goes up again—it's through being on my legs so long (because I had very strong legs when young) and want of good food. When you only have a bit of bread and a cup of tea —no meat, no vegetables—you find it out; but I'm as upright as a dart, and as lissom as ever I was.

“I gives threepence for my brooms. I wears out three in a week in the wet weather. I always lean very hard on my broom, 'specially when the mud is sticky—as it is after the roads is watered. I am very particular about my brooms; I gives 'em away to be burned when many another would use them.”

THE SWEEPER IN PORTMAN SQUARE, WHO GOT PERMISSION FROM THE POLICE.

A WILD-LOOKING man, with long straggling grey hair, which stood out from his head as if he brushed it the wrong way; and whiskers so thick and curling that they reminded one of the wool round a sheep's face, gave me the accompanying history.

He was very fond of making use of the term “honest crust,” and each time he did so, he, Irish-like, pronounced it “currust.” He seemed a kind-hearted, innocent creature, half scared by want and old age.

“I'm blest if I can tell which is the best crossing in London; but mine ain't no great shakes, for I don't take three shilling a-week not with persons going across, take one week with another; but I thought I could get a honest currust (crust) at it, for I've got a crippled hand, which comed of its own accord, and I was in St. George's Hospital seven weeks. When I comed out it was a cripple with me, and I thought the crossing was better than going into the workhouse—for I likes my liberty.

“I've been on this crossing since last Christmas was a twelvemonth. Before that I was a bricklayer and plasterer. I've been thirty-two years in London. I can get as good a character as any one anywhere, please God; for as to drunkards, and all that, I was none of them. I was earning eighteen shilling a-week, and sometimes with my overtime I've had twenty shilling, or even twenty-three shilling. Bricklayers is paid according to all the hours they works beyond ten, for that's the bricklayer's day.

“I was among the lime, and the sand, and the bricks, and then my hand come like this (he held out a hand with all the fingers drawn up towards the middle, like the claw of a dead bird). All the sinews have gone, as you see yourself, sir, so that I can't bend it or straighten it, for the fingers are like bits of stick, and you can't bend 'em without breaking them.

“When I couldn't lay hold of anything, nor lift it up, I showed it to master, and he sent me to his doctor, who gived me something to rub over it, for it was swelled up like, and then I went to St. George's Hospital, and they cut it over, and asked me if I could come in doors as in-door patient? and I said Yes, for I wanted to get it over sooner, and go back to my work, and earn an honest currust. Then they scarred it again, cut it seven times, and I was there many long weeks; and when I comed out I could not hold any tool, so I was forced to keep on pawning and pledging to keep an honest currust in my mouth, and sometimes I'd only just be with a morsel to eat, and sometimes I'd be hungry, and that's the truth.

“What put me up to crossing-sweeping was this—I had no other thing open to me but the workhouse; but of course I'd sooner be out on my liberty, though I was entitled to go into the house, of course, but I'd sooner keep out of it if I could earn an honest currust.

“One of my neighbours persuaded me that I should pick up a good currust at a crossing. The man who had been on my crossing was gone dead, and as it was empty, I went down to the police-office, in Marylebone Lane, and they told me I might take it, and give me liberty to stop. I was told the man who had been there before me had been on it fourteen years, and them was good times for gentle and simple and all—and it was reported that this man had made a good bit of money, at least so it was said.

“I thought I could make a living out of it, or an honest currust, but it's a very poor living, I can assure you. When I went to it first, I done pretty fair for a currust; but it's only three shillings to me now. My missus has such bad health, or she used to help me with her needle. I can assure you, sir, it's only one day a week as I have a bit of dinner, and I often go without breakfast and supper, too.

“I haven't got any regular customers that

allow me anything. When the families is in town sometimes they give me half-a-crown, or sixpence, now and then, perhaps once a fortnight, or a month. They've got footmen and servant-maids, so they never wants no parcels taken—they make *them* do it; but sometimes I get a penny for posting a letter from one of the maids, or something like that.

“The best day for us is Sunday. Sometimes I get a shilling, and when the families is in town eighteen pence. But when the families is away, and the weather so fine there's no mud, and only working-people going to the chapels, they never looks at me, and then I'll only get a shilling.”

ANOTHER WHO GOT PERMISSION TO SWEEP.

AN old Irishman, who comes from Cork, was spoken of to us as a crossing-sweeper who had formally obtained permission before exercising his calling; but I found, upon questioning him, that it was but little more than a true Hibernian piece of conciliation on his part; and, indeed, that out of fear of competition, he had asked leave of the servants and policeman in the neighbourhood.

It seems somewhat curious, as illustrative of the rights of property among crossing-sweepers, that three or four “intending” sweepers, when they found themselves forestalled by the old man in question, had no idea of supplanting the Irishman, and merely remarked,—

“Well, you're lucky to get it so soon, for we meant to take it.”

In reply to our questions, the man said,—

“I came here in January last: I knew the old man was did who used to keep the crossin', and I thought I would like the kind of worruk, for I am getting blind, and hard of hearing likewise. I've got no parish; since the passing of the last Act, I've niver lived long enough in any one parish for that. I applied to Marabone, and they offered to sind me back to Ireland, but I'd got no one to go to, no friends or relations, or if I have, they're as poor there as I am mysilf, sir.

“There was an ould man here before me. He used to have a stool to rest himsilf on, and whin he died, last Christmas, a man as knew him and me asked me whither I would take it or no, and I said I would. His broom and stool were in the coal-cellar at this corner house, Mr. ——'s, where he used to leave them at night times, and they gave them up to me; but I didn't use the stool, sir, it might be an obsthruction to the passers-by; and, sir, it looks as if it was infirrumity. But, plaise the Lord, I'll git and make a stool for myself against the hard winter, I will, bein' a carpenter by thrade.

“I didn't ask the gintlefolks' permission to come here, but I asked the police and the servants, and such as that. I asked the servants at the corner-house. I don't know whither they could have kept me away if I had not asked. Soon after I came here the gintlefolks—some of them—stopped and spoke to me. ‘So,’ says they, ‘you've taken the place of the old man that's did?’ ‘Yes, I have,’ says I. ‘Very will,’ says they, and they give me a ha'penny. That was all that occurred upon my takin' to the crossin'.

“But there were some others who would have taken it if I had not; they tould me I was lucky in gettin' it so soon, or they would have had it, but I don't know who they are.

“I am seventy-three years ould the 2d of June last. My wife is about the same age, and very much afflicted with the rheumatis, and she injured hersilf, too, years ago, by fallin' off a chair while she was takin' some clothes off the line.

“Not to desave you, sir, I get a shillin' a-week from one of my childer and ninepence from another, and a little hilp from some of the others. I have siven childer livin', and have had tin. They are very much scattered: two are abroad; one is in the tinth Hussars—he is kind to me. The one who allows me ninepence is a basket-maker at Reading; and the shillin' I get from my daughter, a servant, sir. One of my sons died in the Crimmy; he was in the 13th Light Dragoons, and died at Scutari, on the 25th of May. They could not hilp me more than they thry to do, sir.

“I only make about two shilling a-week here, sir; and sometimes I don't take three ha'pence a day. On Sundays I take about sivenpence, ninepence, or tinpence, 'cordin' as I see the people who give rigular.

“Weather makes no difference to me—for, though the sum is small, I am a rigular pinsioner like of theirs. I go to Somer's-town Chapel, being a Catholic, for I'm not ashamed to own my religion before any man. When I go, it is at siven in the evening. Sometimes I go to St. Pathrick's Chapel, Soho-square. I have not been to confission for two or three years—the last time was to Mr. Stanton, at St. Pathrick's.

“There's a poor woman, sir, who goes past here every Friday to get her pay from the parish, and, as sure as she comes back again, she gives me a ha'penny—she does, indeed. Sometimes the baker or the greengrocer gives me a ha'penny for minding their baskets.

“I'm perfectly satisfied; it's no use to grumble, and I might be worrus off, sir. Yes, I go of arrinds some times; fitch water now and then, and post letters; but I do no odd jobs, such as hilping the servants to clean the knives, or such-like. No: they wouldn't let me behint the shadow of their doors.”

A THIRD WHO ASKED LEAVE.

THIS one was a mild and rather intelligent man, in a well-worn black dress-coat and waistcoat, a pair of “moleskin” trousers, and a blue-and-white cotton neckerchief. I found him sweeping the crossing at the end of —— place, opposite the church.

He every now and then regaled himself with a pinch of snuff, which seemed to light up his careworn face. He seemed very willing to afford me information. He said:—

"I have been on this crossing four years. I am a bricklayer by trade; but you see how my fingers have gone: it's all rheumatics, sir. I took a great many colds. I had a great deal of underground work, and that tries a man very much.

"How did I get the crossing? Well, I took it—I came as a cas'alty. No one ever interfered with me. If one man leaves a crossing, well, another takes it.

"Yes, some crossings is worth a good deal of money. There was a black in Regent-street, at the corner of Conduit-street, I think, who had two or three houses—at least, I've heard so; and I know for a certainty that the man in Cavendish-square used to get so much a week from the Duke of Portland—he got a shilling a-day, and eighteenpence on Sundays. I don't know why he got more on Sundays. I don't know whether he gets it since the old Duke's death.

"The boys worry me. I mean the little boys with brooms; they are an abusive set, and give me a good deal of annoyance; they are so very cheeky; they watch the police away; but if they see the police coming, they bolt like a shot. There are a great many Irish lads among them. There were not nearly so many boys about a few years ago.

"I once made eighteenpence in one day, that was the best day I ever made: it was very bad weather: but, take the year through, I don't make more than sixpence a-day.

"I haven't worked at bricklaying for a matter of six year. What did I do for the two years before I took to crossing-sweeping? Why, sir, I had saved a little money, and managed to get on somehow. Yes, I have had my troubles, but I never had what I call great ones, excepting my wife's blindness. She was blind, sir, for eleven year, and so I had to fight for everything: she has been dead two year, come September.

"I have seven children, five boys and two girls; they are all grown up and got families. Yes, they ought, amongst them, to do something for me; but if you have to trust to children, you will soon find out what *that* is. If they want anything of you, they know where to find you; but if you want anything of them, it's no go.

"I think I made more money when first I swept this crossing than I do now; it's not a *good* crossing, sir. Oh, no; but it's handy home, you see. When a shower of rain comes on, I can run home, and needn't go into a public-house: but it's a poor neighbourhood.

"Oh yes, indeed sir, I am always here. Certainly; I am laid up sometimes for a day with my feet. I am subject to the rheumatic gout, you see. Well, I don't know whether so much standing has anything to do with it.

"Yes, sir, I *have* heard of what you call 'shutting-up shop.' I never heard it called by that name before, though; but there's lots of sweepers as sweep back the dirt before leaving at night. I know they do, some of them. I never did it myself—I don't care about it; I always think there's the trouble of sweeping it back in the morning.

"People liberal? No, sir, I don't think there are many liberal people about; if people were liberal I should make a good deal of money.

"Sometimes, after I get home, I read a book, if I can borrow one. What do I read? Well, novels, when I can get them. What did I read last night? Well, *Reynolds's Miscellany;* before that I read the *Pilgrim's Progress.* I have read it three times over; but there's always something new in it.

"Well, weather makes very little difference in this neighbourhood. My rent is two-and-sixpence a-week. I have a little relief from the parish. How much? Two-and-sixpence. How much does my living cost? Well, I am forced to live on what I can get. I manage as well as I can; if I have a good week, I spend it—I get more nourishment then, that's all.

"I used to smoke, sir, a great deal, but I haven't touched a pipe for a matter of forty year. Yes, sir, I take snuff, Scotch and Rappee, mixed. If I go without a meal of victuals, I must have my snuff. I take an ounce a-week, sir; it costs fourpence—that there is the only luxury I get, unless somebody gives me a half pint of beer.

"I very rarely get an odd job, this is not the neighbourhood for them things.

"Yes, sir, I go to church on Sunday; I go to All Souls', in Langham-place, the church with the sharp spire. I go in the morning; once a-day is quite enough for me. In the afternoon, I generally take a walk in the Park, or I go to see one of my young ones; they won't come to the old crossing-sweeper, so I go to them."

A Regent-street Crossing-Sweeper.

A man who had stationed himself at the end of Regent-street, near the County Fire Office, gave me the following particulars.

He was a man far superior to the ordinary run of sweepers, and, as will be seen, had formerly been a gentleman's servant. His costume was of that peculiar miscellaneous description which showed that it had from time to time been given to him in charity. A dress-coat so marvellously tight that the stitches were stretching open, a waistcoat with a remnant of embroidery, and a pair of trousers which wrinkled like a groom's top-boot,

had all evidently been part of the wardrobe of the gentlemen whose errands he had run. His boots were the most curious portion of his toilette, for they were large enough for a fisherman, and the portion unoccupied by the foot had gone flat and turned up like a Turkish slipper.

He spoke with a tone and manner which showed some education. Once or twice whilst I was listening to his statement he insisted upon removing some dirt from my shoulder, and, on leaving, he by force seized my hat and brushed it—all which habits of attention he had contracted whilst in service.

I was surprised to see stuck in the wristband of his coat-sleeve a row of pins, arranged as neatly as in the papers sold at the mercers'.

"Since the Irish have come so much—the boys, I mean—my crossing has been completely cut up," he said; "and yet it is in as good a spot as could well be, from the County Fire Office (Mr. Beaumont as owns it) to Swan and Edgar's. It ought to be one of the fust crossings in the kingdom, but these Irish have spiled it.

"I should think, as far as I can guess, I've been on it eight year, if not better; but it was some time before I got known. You see, it does a feller good to be some time on a crossing; but it all depends, of course, whether you are honest or not, for it's according to your honesty as you gets rewarded. By rewarded, I means, you gets a character given to you by word of mouth. For instance, a party wants me to do a job for 'em, and they says, 'Can you get any lady or gentleman to speak for you?' And I says, 'Yes;' and I gets my character by word of mouth—that's what I calls being rewarded.

"Before ever I took a broom in hand, the good times had gone for crossings and sweepers. The good times was thirty year back. In the regular season, when *they* (the gentry) are in town, I *have* taken from one and sixpence to two shillings a-day; but every day's not alike, for people stop at home in wet days. But, you see, in winter-time the crossings ain't no good, and then we turn off to shovelling snow; so that, you see, a shilling a-day is even too high for us to take regular all the year round. Now, I ain't taken a shilling, no, nor a blessed bit of silver, for these three days. All the quality's out of town.

"It ain't what a man gets on a crossing as keeps him; *that* ain't worth mentioning. I don't think I takes sixpence a-day regular—all the year round, mind—on the crossing. No, I'd take my solemn oath I don't! If you was to put down fourpence it would be nearer the mark. I'll tell you the use of a crossing to such as me and my likes. It's our shop, and it ain't what we gets a-sweeping, but it's a place like for us to stand, and then people as wants us, comes and fetches us.

"In the summer I do a good deal in jobs. I do anything in the portering line, or if I'm called to do boots and shoes, or clean knives and forks, then I does that. But that's only when people's busy; for I've only got one regular place I goes to, and that's in A—— street, Piccadilly. I goes messages, parcels, letters, and anything that's required, either for the master of the hotel or the gents that uses there. Now, there's one party at Swan and Edgar's, and I goes to take parcels for him sometimes; and he won't trust anybody but me, for you see I'm know'd to be trustworthy, and then they reckons me as safe as the Bank, —there, that's just it.

"I got to the hotel only lately. You see, when the peace was on and the soldiers was coming home from the Crimmy, then the governor he was exceeding busy, so he give me two shillings a-day and my board; but that wasn't reg'lar, for as he wants me he comes and fetches me. It's a-nigh impossible to say what I makes, it don't turn out reg'lar; Sunday's a shilling or one-and-sixpence, other days nothing at all—not salt to my porridge. You see, when I helps the party at the hotel, I gets my food, and that's a lift. I've never put down what I made in the course of the year, but I've got enough to find food and raiment for myself and family. Sir, I think I may say I gets about six shillings a-week, but it ain't more.

"I've been abroad a good deal. I was in Cape Town, Table Bay, one-and-twenty miles from Simons' Town—for you see the French mans-of-war comes in at Cape Town, and the English mans-of-war comes in at Simons' Town. I was a gentleman's servant over there, and a very good place it was; and if anybody was to have told me years back that I was to have come to what I am now, I could never have credited it; but misfortunes has brought me to what I am.

"I come to England thinking to better myself, if so be it was the opportunity; besides, I was tired of Africy, and anxious to see my native land.

"I was very hard up—ay, very hard up indeed—before I took to the cross, and, in preference to turning out dishonest, I says, I'll buy a broom and go and sweep and get a honest livelihood.

"There was a Jewish lady and her husband used to live in the Suckus, and I knowed them and the family—very fine sons they was—and I went into the shop to ask them to let me work before the shop, and they give me their permission so to do, and, says she, 'I'll allow you threepence a-week.' They've been good friends to me, and send me a messages; and wherever they be, may they do well, I says.

"I sometimes gets clothes give to me, but it's only at Christmas times, or after its over; and that helps me along—it does so, indeed.

"Whenever I sees a pin or a needle, I picks it up; sometimes I finds as many as a dozen a-day, and I always sticks them either in my cuff or in my waistcoat. Very often a lady sees 'em, and then they comes to me and says, 'Can you oblige me with a pin?' and I says, 'Oh yes, marm; a couple, or three, if you requires them;' but it turns out very rare that I gets a trifle for anything like that. I only does it to be obliging—besides, it makes you friends, like.

"I can't tell who's got the best crossing in London. I'm no judge of that; it isn't a broom as can keep a man now. They're going out of town so fast, all the harristocracy; though it's middling classes—such as is in a middling way like—as is the best friends to me."

A Tradesman's Crossing-Sweeper.

A man who had worked at crossing-sweeping as a boy when he first came to London, and again when he grew too old to do his work as a labourer in a coal-yard, gave me a statement of the kind of life he led, and the earnings he made. He was an old man, with a forehead so wrinkled that the dark, waved lines reminded me of the grain of oak. His thick hair was, despite his great age—which was nearly seventy—still dark; and as he conversed with me, he was continually taking off his hat, and wiping his face with what appeared to be a piece of flannel, about a foot square.

His costume was of what might be called "the all-sorts" kind, and, from constant wear, it had lost its original colour, and had turned into a sort of dirty green-grey hue. It consisted of a waistcoat of tweed, fastened together with buttons of glass, metal, and bone; a tail-coat, turned brown with weather, a pair of trousers repaired here and there with big stitches, like the teeth of a comb, and these formed the extent of his wardrobe. Around the collar of the coat and waistcoat, and on the thighs of the pantaloons, the layers of grease were so thick that the fibre of the cloth was choked up, and it looked as if it had been pieced with bits of leather.

Rubbing his unshorn chin, whereon the bristles stood up like the pegs in the barrel of a musical-box—until it made a noise like a hair-brush, he began his story:—

"I'm known all about in Parliament-street—ay, every bit about them parts,—for more than thirty year. Ay, I'm as well known as the statty itself, all about them parts at Charing-cross. Afore I took to crossing-sweeping I was at coal-work. The coal-work I did was backing and filling, and anythink in that way. I worked at Wood's, and Penny's, and Douglas's. They were good masters, Mr. Wood 'specially; but the work was too much for me as I got old. There was plenty of coal work in them times; indeed, I've yearned as much as nine shillings of a day. That was the time as the meters was on. Now men can hardly earn a living at coal-work. I left the coal-work because I was took ill with a fever, as was brought on by sweating—over-*exaction* they called it. It left me so weak I wasn't able to do nothink in the yards.

"I know Mr. G——, the fishmonger, and Mr. J——, the publican. I should think Mr. J—— has knowed me this eight-and-thirty-year, and they put me on to the crossing. You see, when I was odd man at a coal job, I'd go and do whatever there was to be done in the neighbourhood. If there was anythink as Mr. G——'s men couldn't do—such as carrying fish home to a customer, when the other men were busy—I was sent for. Or Mr. J—— would send me with sperrits—a gallon, or half a gallon, or anythink of that sort—a long journey. In fact, I'd get anythink as come handy.

"I had done crossing-sweeping as a boy, before I took to coal-work, when I first come out of the country. My own head first put me up to the notion, and that's more than fifty year ago—ay, more than that; but I can't call to mind exactly, for I've had no parents ever since I was eight year old, and now I'm nigh seventy; but it's as close as I can remember. I was about thirteen at that time. There was no police on then, and I saw a good bit of road as was dirty, and says I, 'That's a good spot to keep clean,' and I took it. I used to go up to the tops of the houses to throw over the snow, and I've often been obliged to get men to help me. I suppose I was about the first person as ever swept a crossing in Charing-cross; (here, as if proud of the fact, he gave a kind of moist chuckle, which ended in a fit of coughing). I used to make a good bit of money then; but it ain't worth nothink, now.

"After I left coal-backing, I went back to the old crossing opposite the Adm'ralty gates, and I stopped there until Mr. G—— give me the one I'm on now, and thank him for it, I says. Mr. G—— had the crossing paved, as leads to his shop, to accommodate the customers. He had a German there to sweep it afore me. He used to sweep in the day—come about ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, and then at night he turned watchman; for when there was any wenson, as Mr. G—— deals in, hanging out, he was put to watch it. This German worked there, I reckon, about seven year, and when he died I took the crossing.

"The crossing ain't much of a living for any body—that is, what I takes on it. But then I've got regular customers as gives me money. There's Mr. G——, he gives a shilling a-week; and there's Captain R——, of the Adm'ralty, he gives me sixpence a fortnight; and another captain, of the name of R——, he gives me fourpence every Sunday. Ah! I'd forgot Mr. O——, the Secretary at the Adm'ralty; he gives me sixpence now and then. Besides, I do a lot of odd jobs for different people; they knows where to come and find me when they wants me. They gets me to carry letters, or a parcel, or a box, or anythink of that there. I has a bit of vittals, too,

give me every now and then; but as for money, it's very little as I get on the crossings—perhaps seven or eight shilling a-week, reg'lar customers and all.

"I never heard of anybody as was leaving a crossing selling it; no, never. My crossing ain't a reg'lar one as anybody could have. If I was to leave, it depends upon whether Mr. G—— would like to have the party, as to who gets it. There's no such thing as turning a reg'lar sweeper out, the police stops that. I've been known to them for years, and they are very kind to me. As they come's by they says, 'Jimmy, how are you?' You see, my crossing comes handy for them, for it's agin Scotland-yard; and when they turns out in their clean boots it saves their blacking.

"Lord G—— used to be at the Adm'ralty, but he ain't there now; I don't know why he left, but he's gone. He used to give me sixpence every now and then when he come over. I was near to my crossing when Mr. Drummond was shot, but I wasn't near enough to hear the pistol; but I didn't see nothink. I know'd the late Sir Robert Peel, oh, certantly, but he seldom crossed over my crossing, though whenever he did, he'd give me somethink. The present Sir Robert goes over to the chapel in Spring-gardens when he's in town, but he keeps on the other side of the way; so I never had anythink from him. He's the very picture of his father, and I knows him from that, only his father were rather stouter than he is. I don't know none of the members of parliament, they most on 'em keeps on shifting so, that I hasn't no time to recognise 'em.

"The watering-carts ain't no friends of our'n. They makes dirt and no pay for cleaning it. There's so much traffic with coaches and carts going right over my crossing that a fine or wet day don't make much difference to me, for people are afraid to cross for fear of being run over. I'm forced to have my eyes about me and dodge the wehicles. I never heerd, as I can tell on, of a crossing-sweeper being run over."

2. The Able-bodied Female Crossing-Sweepers.

The Old Woman "over the Water."

She is the widow of a sweep—"as respectable and 'dustrious a man," I was told, "as any in the neighbourhood of the 'Borough;' he was a short man, sir,—very short," said my informant, "and had a weakness for top-boots, white hats, and leather breeches," and in that unsweeplike costume he would parade himself up and down the Dover and New Kent-roads." He had a capital connexion (or, as his widow terms it, "seat of business"), and left behind him a good name and reputation that would have kept the "seat of business" together, if it had not been for the misconduct of the children, two of whom (sons) have been transported, while a daughter "went wrong," though she, wretched creature, paid a fearful penalty, I learnt, for her frailties, having been burnt to death in the middle of the night, through a careless habit of smoking in bed.

The old sweeper herself, eighty years of age, and almost beyond labour, very deaf, and rather feeble to all appearance, yet manages to get out every morning between four and five, so as to catch the workmen and "time-keepers" on their way to the factories. She has the true obsequious curtsey, but is said to be very strong in her "likes and dislikes."

She bears a good character, though sometimes inclining, I was informed, towards "the other half-pint," but never guilty of any excess. She is somewhat profuse in her scriptural ejaculations and professions of gratitude. Her statement was as follows:—

"Fifteen years I've been on the crossing, come next Christmas. My husband died in Guy's Hospital, of the cholera, three days after he got in, and I took to the crossing some time after. I had nothing to do. I am eighty years of age, and I couldn't do hard work. I have nothing but what the great God above pleases to give me. The poor woman who had the crossing before me was killed, and so I took it. The gentleman who was the foreman of the road, gave me the grant to take it. I didn't ask him, for poor people as wants a bit of bread they goes on the crossings as they likes, but he never interfered with me. The first day I took sixpence; but them good times is all gone, they'll never come back again. The best times I used to take a shilling a-day, and now I don't take but a few pence. The winter is as bad as the summer, for poor people haven't got it to give, and gentlefolks get very near now. People are not so liberal as they used to be, and they never will be again.

"To do a hard day's washing, I couldn't. I used to go to a lady's house to do a bit of washing when I had my strength, but I can't do it now.

"People going to their offices at six or seven in the morning gives me a ha'penny or a penny; if they don't, I must go without it. I go at five, and stand there till eleven or twelve, till I find it is no use being there any longer. Oh, the gentlemen give me the most, I'm sure; the ladies don't give me nothing.

"At Christmas I get a few things—a gentleman gave me these boots I've got on, and a ticket for a half-quartern loaf and a hundred of coals. I have got as much as five shillings at Christmas—but those times will never come back again. I get no more than two shillings and sixpence at Christmas now.

"My husband, Thomas —— was his name, was a chimley-sweep. He did a very good business—it was all done by his sons. We had a boy with us, too, just as a friendly boy. I was a mother and a mistress to him. I've had eleven children. I'm grandmother to fifteen, and a great-grandmother, too. They won't give me a bite of bread, though, any of 'em, I've got four children living, as far as I know, two abroad and two home here with families. I never go among 'em. It is not in my power to assist 'em, so I never go to distress 'em.

"I get two shilling a-week from the parish, and I have to pay out of that for a quartern loaf, a quartern of sugar, and an ounce of tea. The parish forces it on me, so I must take it, and that only leaves me one shilling and fourpence. A shilling of it goes for my lodging. I lodge with people who knew my family and me, and took a liking to me; they let me come there instead of wandering about the streets.

"I stand on my crossing till I'm like to drop over my broom with tiredness. Yes, sir, I go to church at St. George's in the Borough. I go there every Sunday morning, after I leave my roads. They've taken the organ and charity children away that used to be there when I was a girl, so it's not a church now, it's a chapel. There's nothing but the preacher and the gentlefolks, and they sings their own psalms. There are gatherings at that church, but whether it's for the poor or not I don't know. *I* don't get any of it.

"It was a great loss to me when my husband died; I went all to ruin then. My father belonged to Scotland, at Edinboro'. My mother came from Yorkshire. I don't know where Scotland is no more than the dead. My father was a gentleman's gardener and watchman. My mother used to go out a-chairing, and she was drowned just by Horsemonger Lane. She was coming through the Halfpenny Hatch, that used to be just facing the Crown and Anchor, in the New Kent-road; there was an open ditch there, sir. She took the left-hand turning instead of the right, and was drownded. My father died in St. Martin's Workhouse. He died of apoplexy fit.

"I used to mind my father's place till mother died. His housekeeper I was—God help me! a fine one too. Thank the Lord, my husband was a clever man; he had a good seat of business. I lost my right hand when he died. I couldn't carry it on. There was my two sons went for sogers, and the others were above their business. He left a seat of business worth a hundred pound; he served all up the New Kent-road. He was beloved by all his people. He used to climb himself when I first had him, but he left it off when he got children. I had my husband when I was fifteen, and kept him forty years. Ah! he was well-beloved by all around, except his children, and they behaved shameful. I said to his eldest son, when he lay in the hospital, (asking your pardon, sir, for mentioning it)—I says to his eldest son, 'Billy,' says I, 'your father's very bad—why don't you go to see him?' 'Oh,' says he, 'he's all right, he's gettin' better;' and he was never the one to go and see him once; and he never come to the funeral.

"Billy thought I should come upon him after his death, but I never troubled him for as much as a crumb of bread.

"I never get spoken to on my roads, only some people say, 'Good morning,' 'There you are, old lady.' They never asks me no questions whatsomever. I never get run over, though I am very hard of hearing; but I am forced to have my eyes here, there, and everywhere, to keep out of the way of the carts and coaches.

"Some days I goes to my crossing, and earns nothink at all: other days it's sometimes fourpence, sometimes sixpence. I earned fourpence to-day, and I had a bit of snuff out of it. Why, I believe I did yearn fivepence yesterday—I won't tell no story. I got ninepence on Sunday—that was a good day; but, God knows, that didn't go far. I yearned so much I couldn't bring it home on Saturday—it almost makes me laugh,—I yearned sixpence.

"I goes every morning, winter or summer, frost or snow; and at the same hour (five o'clock); people certainly don't think of giving so much in fine weather. Nobody ever mislested me, and I never mislested nobody. If they gives me a penny, I thanks 'em; and if they gives me nothing, I thanks 'em all the same.

"If I was to go into the House, I shouldn't live three days. It's not that I eat much—a very little is enough for me; but it's the air I should miss: to be shut up like a thief, I couldn't live long, I know."

The Old Woman Crossing-Sweeper who had a Pensioner.

This old dame is remarkable from the fact of being the chief support of a poor deaf cripple, who is as much poorer than the crossing-sweeper as she is poorer than Mrs. ——, in —— street, who allows the sweeper sixpence a-week. The crossing-sweeper is a rather stout old woman, with a carneying tone, and constant curtsey. She complains, in common with most of her class, of the present hard times, and reverts longingly to the good old days when people were more liberal than they are now, and had more to give. She says:—

"I was on my crossing before the police was made, for I am not able to work, and only get helped by the people who knows me. Mr. ——, in the square, gives me a shilling a-week; Mrs. ——, in —— street, gives me sixpence; (she has gone in the country now, but she has left it at the oil-shop for me); that's what I depinds upon, darlin', to help pay my rent, which is half-a-crown. My rent was three shillings, till the landlord didn't wish me to go, 'cause I was so punctual with my money. I give a corner of my room to a poor cretur, who's deaf as a beadle; she works at the soldiers' coats, and is a very good hand at it, and would earn a good deal of money if she had constant work. She owed as good as twelve shillings and sixpence for rent, poor thing, where she was last, and the landlord took all her goods except her bed; she's got that, so I give her a corner of my room for charity's sake. We must look to one another: she's as poor as a church mouse. I thought she would be company for me, still a deaf person is but poor company to one. She had that heavy sickness they call the cholera about five years ago, and it fell in her side and in the side of her head too—that made her deaf. Oh! she's a poor object. She has been with me since the month of February. I've lent her money out of my own pocket. I give her a cup of tea or a slice of bread when I see she hasn't got any. Then the people up-stairs are kind to her, and give her a bite and a sup.

"My husband was a soldier; he fought at the battle of Waterloo. His pension was ninepence a-day. All my family are dead, except my grandson, what's in New Orleans. I expect him back this very month that now we have: he gave me four pounds before he went, to carry me over the last winter.

"If the Almighty God pleases to send him back, he'll be a great help to me. He's all I've got left. I never had but two children in all my life.

"I worked in noblemen's houses before I was married to my husband, who is dead; but he came to be poor, and I had to leave my houses where I used to work.

"I took twopence-halfpenny yesterday, and threepence to-day; the day before yesterday I didn't take a penny. I never come out on Sunday; I goes to Rosomon-street Chapel. Last Saturday I made one shilling and sixpence; on Friday, sixpence. I dare say I make three shillings and sixpence a-week, besides the one shilling and sixpence I gets allowed me. I am forced to make a do of it somehow, but I've no more strength left in me than this ould broom."

The Crossing-Sweeper who had been a Servant-Maid.

She is to be found any day between eight in the morning and seven in the evening, sweeping away in a convulsive, jerky sort of manner, close to —— square, near the Foundling. She may be known by her pinched-up straw bonnet, with a broad, faded, almost colourless ribbon. She has weak eyes, and wears over them a brownish shade. Her face is tied up, because of a gathering which she has on her head. She wears a small, old plaid cloak, a clean checked apron, and a tidy printed gown.

She is rather shy at first, but willing and obliging enough withal; and she lives down Little —— Yard, in Great —— street. The "yard" that is made like a mousetrap—small at the entrance, but amazingly large inside, and dilapidated though extensive.

Here are stables and a couple of blind alleys, nameless, or bearing the same name as the yard itself, and wherein are huddled more people than one could count in a quarter of an hour, and more children than one likes to remember,—dirty children, listlessly trailing an old tin baking-dish, or a worn-out shoe, tied to a piece of string; sullen children, who turn away in a fit of sleepy anger if spoken to; screaming children, setting all the parents in the "yard" at defiance; and quiet children, who are arranging banquets of dirt in the reeking gutters.

The "yard" is devoted principally to costermongers.

The crossing-sweeper lives in the top-room of a two-storied house, in the very depth of the blind alley at the end of the yard. She has not even a room to herself, but pays one shilling a-week for the privilege of sleeping with a woman who gets her living by selling tapes in the streets.

"Ah!" says the sweeper, "poor woman, she *has* a hard time of it; her husband is in the hospital with a bad leg—in fact, he's scarcely ever out. If you could hear that woman cough, you'd never forget it. She would have had to starve to-day if it hadn't been for a person who actually lent her a gown to pledge to raise her stock-money, poor thing."

The room in which these people live has a sloping roof, and a small-paned window on each side. For furniture, there were two chairs and a shaky, three-legged stool, a deal table, and a bed rolled up against the wall—nothing else. In one corner of the room lay the last lump remaining of the seven pounds of coals. In another corner there were herbs in pans, and two water-bottles without their noses. The most striking thing in that little room was some crockery, the woman had managed to save from the wreck of her things; among this, curiously enough, was a soup-tureen, with its lid not even cracked.

There *was* a piece of looking-glass—a small three-cornered piece—forming an almost equilateral triangle,—and the oldest, and most rubbed and worn-out piece of a mirror that ever escaped the dust-bin.

The fireplace was a very small one, and on the table were two or three potatoes and about one-fifth of a red herring, which the poor street-seller had saved out of her breakfast to serve for her supper. "Take my solemn word for it, sir," said the sweeper, "and I wouldn't deceive you, that is all she will get besides a cup of weak tea when she comes home tired at night."

The statement of this old sweeper is as follows:—

"My name is Mary ——. I live in —— yard. I live with a person of the name of ——, in the back attic; she gets her living by selling flowers in pots in the street, but she is now doing badly. I pay her a shilling a-week.

"My parents were Welsh. I was in service, or maid-of-all-work, till I got married. My husband was a seafaring man when I married him. After we were married, he got his living by selling memorandum-almanack books, and the like, about the streets. He was driven to that because he had no trade in his hand, and he was obliged to do something for a living. He did not make much, and over-exertion, with want of nourishment, brought on a paralytic stroke. He had the first fit about two years before he had the second; the third fit, which was the last, he had on the Monday, and died on the Wednesday week. I have two children still living. One of them is married to a poor man, who gets his living in the streets; but as far as lays in his power he makes a good husband and father. My other daughter is living with a niece of mine, for I can't keep her, sir; she minds the children.

"My father was a journeyman shoemaker. He was killed; but I cannot remember how—I was too young. I can't recollect my mother. I was brought up by an uncle and aunt till I was able to go to service. I went out to service at five, to mind children under a nurse, and I was in service till I got married. I had a great many situations; you see, sir, I was forced to keep in place, because I had nowhere to go to, my uncle and aunt not being able to keep me. I was never in noblemen's families, only trades-people's. Service was very hard, sir, and so I believe it continues.

"I am fifty-five years of age, and I have been on the crossing fourteen years; but just now it is very poor work indeed. Well, if I wishes for bad weather, I'm only like other people, I suppose. I have no regular customers at all; the only one I had left has lost his senses, sir. Mr. H——, he used to allow us sixpence a-week; but he went mad, and we don't get it now. By us, I mean the three crossing-sweepers in the square where I work.

"Indeed, I like the winter-time, for the families is in. Though the weather is more severe, yet you *do* get a few more ha'pence. I take more from the staid elderly people than from the young. At Christmas, I think I took about eleven shillings, but certainly not more. The most I ever made at that season was fourteen shillings. The worst about Christmas is, that those who give much then generally hold their hand for a week or two.

"A shilling a-day would be as much as I want, sir. I have stood in the square all day for a ha'penny, and I have stood here for nothing. One week with another, I make two shillings in the seven days, after paying for my broom. I have taken threppence ha'penny to-day. Yesterday—let me see—well, it was threppence ha'penny, too; Monday I don't remember; but Sunday I recollect—it was fippence ha'penny. Years ago I made a great deal more—nearly three times as much.

"I come about eight o'clock in the morning. and go away about six or seven; I am here every day. The boys used to come at one time with their brooms, but they're not allowed here now by the police.

"I should not think crossings worth purchasing, unless people made a better living on them than I do."

I gave the poor creature a small piece of silver for her trouble, and asked her if that, with the threepence halfpenny, made a good day. She answered heartily—

"I should like to see such another day to-morrow, sir.

"Yes, winter is very much better than summer, only for the trial of standing in the frost and snow, but we certainly *do* get more then. The families won't be in town for three months to come yet. Ah! this neighbourhood is nothing to what it was. By God's removal, and by their own removal, the good families are all gone. The present families are not so liberal nor so wealthy. It is not the richest people that give the most. Tradespeople, and 'specially gentlefolks who have situations, are better to me than the nobleman who rides in his carriage.

"I always go to Trinity Church, Gray's-inn-road, about two doors from the Welsh School —the Rev. Dr. Witherington preaches there. I always go on Sunday afternoon and evening, for I can't go in the morning; I can't get away from my crossing in time. I never omit a day in coming here, unless I'm ill, or the snow is too heavy, or the weather too bad, and then I'm obligated to resign.

"I have no friends, sir, only my children; my uncle and aunt have been dead a long time. I go to see my children on Sunday, or in the evening, when I leave here.

"After I leave I have a cup of tea, and after that I go to bed; very frequently I'm in bed at nine o'clock. I have my cup of tea if I can anyway get it; but I'm forced to go without *that* sometimes.

"When my sight was better, I used to be very partial to reading; but I can't see the print, sir, now. I used to read the Bible, and the newspaper. Story-books I have read, too, but not many novels. Yes, *Robinson Crusoe* I know, but not the *Pilgrim's Progress*. I've heard of it; they tell me it is a very interesting book to read, but I never had it. We never have any ladies or Scripture-readers come to our lodgings; you see, we're so out, they might come a dozen times and not find us at home.

"I wear out three brooms in a-week; but in the summer one will last a fortnight. I give threepence ha'penny for them; there are twopenny-ha'penny brooms, but they are not so good, they are liable to have their handles come out. It is very fatiguing standing so many hours; my legs aches with pain, and swells. I was once in Middlesex Hospital for sixteen weeks with my legs. My eyes have been weak from a child. I have got a gathering in my head from catching cold standing on the crossing. I had the fever this time twelvemonth. I laid a fortnight and four days at home, and seven weeks in the hospital. I took the diarrhœa after that, and was six weeks under the doctor's hands. I used to do odd jobs, but my health won't permit me now. I used to make two or three shillings a-week by 'em, and get scraps and things. But I get no broken victuals now.

"I never get anything from servants; they don't get more than they know what to do with.

"I don't get a drop of beer once in a month.

"I don't know but what this being out may be the best thing, after all; for if I was at home all my time, it would not agree with me."

STATEMENT OF "OLD JOHN," THE WATERMAN AT THE FARRINGDON-STREET CAB-STAND, CONCERNING THE OLD BLACK CROSSING-SWEEPER WHO LEFT £800 TO MISS WAITHMAN.

"YES, sir, I knew him for many year, though I never spoke to him in all my life. He was a stoutish, thickset man, about my build, and used to walk with his broom up and down—so."

Here "Old John" imitated the halt and stoop of an old man.

"He used to touch his hat continually," he went on. "'Please remember the poor black man,' was his cry, never anything else. Oh yes, he made a great deal of money. People gave more then than they do now. Where they give one sixpence now, they *used* to give ten. It's just the same by our calling. Lived humbly? Yes, I think he did; at all events, he seemed to do so when he was on his crossing. He got plenty of odds-and-ends from the corner *there*—Alderman Waithman's, I mean; he was a very sober, quiet sort of man. No, sir, nothing peculiar in his dress. Some blacks are peculiar in their dress; but he would wear anything he could get give him. They used to call him Romeo, I think. Cur'ous name, sir; but the best man I ever knew was called Romeo, and he was a black.

"The crossing-sweeper had his regular customers; he knew their times, and was there to the moment. Oh yes, he was always. Hail, rain, or snow, he never missed. I don't know how long he had the crossing. I remember him ever since I was a postboy in Doctors' Commons; I knew him when I lived in Holborn, and I haven't been away from this neighbourhood since 1809.

"No, sir, there's no doubt about his leaving the money to Miss Waithman. Everybody round about here knows it; just ask them, sir. Miss Waithman (an old maid she were, sir) used to be very kind to him. He used to sweep from Alderman Waithman's (it's the *Sunday Times* now) across to the opposite side of the way.

"When he died, an old man, as had been a soldier, took possession of the crossing. How did he get it? Why, I say, he *took it*. First come, first sarved, sir; that's their way. They never sell crossings. Sometimes (for a lark) they shift, and then one stands treat—a gallon of beer, or something of that sort. The perlice interfered with the soldier—you know the sweepers is all forced to go if the perlice interfere; now with us, sir, we are licensed, and they can't make us move on. They interfered, I say, with the old soldier, because he used to get so drunk. Why, at a public-house close at hand, he would spent seven, eight, and ten shillings on a night, three or four days together. He used to gather so many blackguards round the crossing, they were forced to move him at last. A young man has got it now; he has had it three year. He is not always here, sometimes away for a week at a stretch; but, you see, he knows the best times to come, and then he is *sure* to be here. The little boys come with their brooms now and then, but the perlice always drive them away."

3. THE ABLE-BODIED IRISH CROSSING-SWEEPER.

THE OLD IRISH CROSSING-SWEEPER.

THIS man, a native of "County Corruk," has been in England only two years and a half. He wears a close-fitting black cloth cap over a shock of reddish hair; round his neck he has a coloured cotton kerchief, of the sort advertised as "Imitation Silk." His black coat is much torn, and his broom is at present remarkably stumpy. He waits quietly at the post opposite St. ——'s Church, to receive whatever is offered him. He is unassuming enough in his manner, and, as will be seen, not even bearing any malice against his two enemies, "The Swatestuff Man" and "The Switzer." He says:—

"I've been at this crossin' near upon two year. Whin I first come over to England (about two years and a half ago), I wint a haymakin', but, you see, I couldn't get any work; and afther thrampin' about a good bit, why my eyesight gettin' very wake, and I not knowin' what to do, I took this crossin'.

"How did I get it?—Will, sir, I wint walkin' about and saw it, and nobody on it. So one mornin' I brought a broom wid me and stood here. Yes, sir, I *was* intherfered wid. The man with one arm—a Switzer they calls him —he had had the crossin' on Sundays for a long while gone, and he didn't like my bein' here at all, at all. 'B——y Irish' he used to call me, and other scandalizin' names; and he and the swatestuff man opposite, who was a friend of his, tried everythin' they could to git me off the crossin'. But sure I niver harrumed them at all, at all.

"Yis, sir, I have my rigular custhomers: there's Mr. ——, he's gone to Sydenham; he's very kind, sir. He gives me a shilling a-month. He left wurrud with the sarvint while he's away to give me a shilling on the first day in every month. He gave me a letter to the Eye Hospital, in Goulden Square, because of the wakeness of my eyesight; but they'll niver cure it at all, at all, sir, for wake eyes runs in my family. My sister, sir, has wake eyes; she is working at Croydon.

"Oh no, indeed, and it isn't the gintlefolks that thry to get me off the crossin'; they'd rather shupport me, sir. But the poor payple it is that don't like me.

"Eighteenpince I've made in a day, and more: niver more than two shillings, and sometimes not sixpence. Will, sir, I am not like the others; I don't run afther the ladies and gintlemen—I don't persevere. Yestherday I took sixpence, by chance, for takin' some luggage for a lady. The day before yestherday I took three ha'pence; but I think I got somethin' else for a bit of worruk thin.

"Yes, winther is better than summer. I don't know which people is the most liberal. Sure, sir, I don't think there's much difference. Oh yes, sir, young men are very liberal sometimes, and so are young ladies. Perhaps old ladies or old gintlemen give the most at a time,—sometimes sixpence,—perhaps more; but thin, sir, you don't git anything else for a long time.

"The boy-sweepers annoy me very much, indeed; they use such scandalizin' worruds to me, and throw dirrut, they do. They know whin the police is out of the way, so I git no purtiction.

"Sure, sir, and I think it right that ivery person should attind the worruship to which he belongs. I am a Catholic, sir, and attind mass at St. Pathrick's, near St. Giles's, ivery Sunday, and I thry to be at confission wonst a month.

"Whin first I took to the crossin', I was rather irrigular; but that was because of the Switzer man—that's the man with the one arm; he used to say he would lock me up, and iverything. But I have been rigular since.

"I come in the morruning just before eight, in time to catch the gintlefolks going into prayers; and I leave at half-past seven to eight at night. I wait so late because I have to bring a gintleman wather for his flowers, and that I do the last thing.

"I live, sir, in —— lane, behind St. Giles's Church, in the first-flure front, sir; and I pay one-and-threepence a-week. There are three bids in the room. In one bid, a man, his wife, his mother, and their little girl—Julia, they call her—sleep; in the other bid, there's a man and his wife and child. Yes, I am single, and have the third bid to myself. I come from County Corruk; the others in the room are all Irish, and come from County Corruk too. They sill fruit in the sthreet; in the winther they sill onions, and sometimes oranges.

"There a Scotch gintleman as brings me my breakfast every morning; indeed, yes, and he brings it himself, he does. He has gone to Scotland now, but he will be back in a week. He brings me some bread and mate, and a pinny for a half pint of beer, sir. He has done it almost all the time I have been here.

"The Switzer man, sir, took out boards for the *Polytickner*, or some place like that. He got fifteen shillings a-week, and used to come here on Sundays. Yes, sir, *I* come here on Sundays; but it is not better than other days. Some people says to me, they would rather I went to church; but I tells 'em I do; and sure, sir, afther mass, there's no harrum in a little sweepin' between whiles.

"No, sir, there's not a crossin'-sweeper in Ould Ireland. Well, sir, I niver was in Dublin; but I've been in Corruk, sir, and they don't have any crossin' sweepers there.

"Whin I git home of a night, sir, I am very tired; but I always offer up my devotions before sleepin'. Ah, sir, I should niver have swipt crossin's if a friend of mine hadn't died; he was collector of tolls in Clarnykilts, and I used to be with him. He lost his situation, and so I came to England.

"The Switzer man, I think he used to sweep at eight o'clock, just as the people were goin' to prayers. Oh, sir, he was always blackgeyardin' me. 'Go back to your own counthry,' says he—a furriner himsilf, too.

"Will, yes sir, I do wish for bad weather; a good wit day, and a dry day afther, is the best.

"Sure and they can't turn me off my crossin' only for my bad conduct, and I thry to be quiet and take no notice.

"Yis, sir, I have always been a church-goer, and I am seventy-five. I used to have some good rigular customers, but somehow I haven't seen anythin' of them for this last twelvemonth. Ah! it's in the betther neighbourhoods that people give rigularly. I niver get any broken victuals. Three-and-sixpence is the outside of my earnings, taking one week with the other.

"What is the laste I ever took? Will, sir, for three days I haven't taken a farthin'. The worust week I iver had was thirteen or fourteen pence altogether; the best week I iver had was the winter before last—that harrud winter, sir, I remember takin' seven shillings thin; but the man at Portman-square makes the most.

"Well, sir, I belave there's some of every nation in the world as sweeps crossin's in London."

The Female Irish Crossing-Sweeper.

In a street not far from Gordon-square and the New-road, I found this poor old woman resting from her daily labour. She was sitting on the stone ledge of the iron railings at the corner of the street, huddled up in the way seemingly natural to old Irishwomen, her broom hidden as much as possible under her

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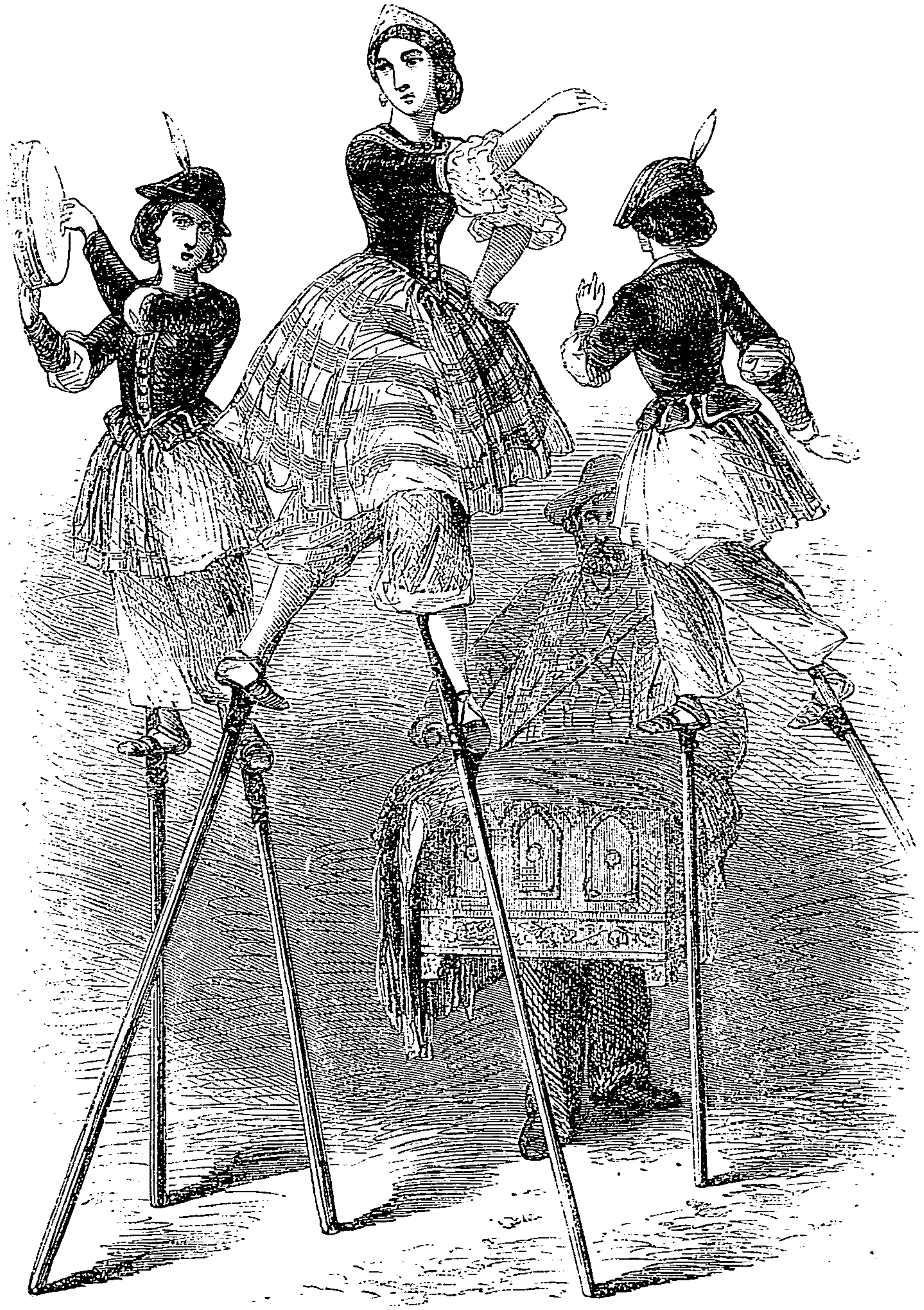

STREET-PERFORMERS ON STILTS.

[*From a Sketch.*]

petticoats. Her shawl was as tidy as possible for its age. She was sixty-seven years, and had buried two husbands and five children, fractured her ribs, and injured her groin, and had nothing left to comfort her but her crossing, her ha'porth of snuff, and her "drop of biled wather," by which name she indicated her "tay."

She was very civil and intelligent, and answered my inquiries very readily, and with rather less circumlocution than the Irish generally display. She seemed much hurt at the closing of the Old St. Pancras churchyard. "They buried my child where they'll never bury me, sir," she cried.

She told the story of her accident with many involuntary movements of her hand towards the injured part, and took a sparing pinch of snuff from a little black snuff-box, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, for which she said she had given a penny. She proceeded thus:—"I'm an Irishwoman, sir, and it's from Kinsale I come, twelve miles beyond Corruk, to the left-hand side, a seaport town, and a great place for fish. It's fifty years the sixteenth of last June since I came in St. Giles's parish, and there my ildest child wint did. Buried she is in Ould St. Pancras churchyarrud, where they'll never bury me, sir, for they've done away with burying in churchyarruds. That girl was forty-one year of age the seventeenth of last February, born in Stratford, below Bow, in Essex. Ah! I was comfortable there; I lived there three year and abouts. I was in sarvice at Mr. ——'s, a Frinch gintleman he was, and kept a school, where they taught Frinch and English both; but I dare say they are all gone did years ago. He was a very ould gintleman, and so was his lady; she was a North-of-England lady, but very stout, and had no children but a son and daughter. I was quite young when my aunt brought me over. My uncle was three year here before my aunt, and he died at Whitechapel. I was bechuxt sixteen and seventeen when I come over, and I reckon meself at sixty-seven come next Christmas, as well as I can guess. I never had a mother, sir; she died when I was only six months old. My father, sir, was maltster to Mr. Walker the distiller, in Corruk. Ah! indeed, and my father was well to do wonst. Early or late, wit or dry, he had a guinea a-week, but he worruked day and night; he was to attind to the corun, and he would have four min, or five or six, ndther him, according as busy they might e. My father has been did four-and-twinty ear, and I wouldn't know a crature if I wint ome. Father come over, sir, and wanted me o go back very bad, but I wouldn't. I was arried thin, and had buried some of my hilder in St. Pancras; and for what shóuld lave England?

"Oh! sir, I buried three in eight months, two sons and their father. My husband was o year and tin months keeping his bed; he has been did fifteen years to the eighth of last March; but I've been married again.

"Siven childer I've had, and ounly two alive, and they've got enough to do to manage for thimsilves. The boy, he follers the market, and my daughter, she is along with her husband; sure he sills in the streets, sir. I see very little of her,—she lives over in the Borough.

"I think I'll be afther going down to Kent, beyant Maidstone, a hop-picking, if I can git as much as to take me down the road.

"My daughter's husband and me don't agree, so I'm bitter not to see them.

"Ivery day, sir—ivery day in the week I am here. This morunning I was here at eight—that was earlier than usual, but I came out because I had not broke my fast with anything but a drop of wather, and that I had two tumblers of it from the house at the corrunner. I intind to go home and take two hirrings, and have a drop of biled wather—tay, I mane, sir.

"I come here at about half-past nine to half-past ten, but I'm gitting a very bad leg. I goes home about five or six.

"I have taken two ha'pennies this morning; thruppence I took yisterday; the day before I took, I think, fourpence ha'penny; that was my taking on Monday; on Sunday I mustered a shilling; on Saturday—I declare, sir, I forgit—fourpence or thruppence, I suppose, but my frinds is out of town very much. They gives me a penny riguiar every Sunday, or a ha'penny, and some tuppence. Of a Sunday in the good time I may take eighteenpence or sixteenpence.

"Oh, yes, of Christmas it's better, it is—four or five shillings on a Christmas-day.

"On the Monday fortnight, before last Christmas twelvemonth, I had two ribs broke, and one fractured, and my grine (groin) bone injured. Oh! the pains that I feel even now, sir. I lived then in Phillip's-gardens, up there in the New-road. The policeman took me to the hospital. It was eighteen days I niver got off my bid. I came out in the morunning of the Christmas-eve. I hild on by the railings as I wint along, and I thought I niver should git home. How I was knocked down was by a cart; I had my eye bad thin, the lift one, and had a cloth over it. I was just comin' out of the archway of the courrut (close by the beer-shop) away from Mr. ——'s house, when crossing to the green-grocer's to git two pound of praties for my supper, I didn't see the cart comin'. I was knocked down by the shaft. They called, and they called, and he wouldn't stop, and it wint over me, it did. It was loaded with cloth; I don't know if it wasn't a Shoolbred's cart, but the boy said to the hospital-doctor and to the policeman it was heavily loaded. The boy gave me a shilling, and that was all the money I received. For a twelvemonth I couldn't hardly walk.

"On that Christmas-day I took four-and-tinpence, but I owed it all for rint and things; and I'm sure it's a good man that let me run it the score.

"Is it a shillin' I iver git? Well, thin, sir, there's one gintleman, but he's out of town—Sir George Hewitt—niver passes without givin' me a shillin'.

"I have taken one-and-ninepence on a Sunday, and I've taken two shillin's. Upon my sowl, I've often gone home with three ha'pence and tuppence. For this month past, put ivery day together, I haven't taken three shilling a-week.

"I wear two brooms out in a week in bad wither, and thin p'rhaps I take four to five shillin', Sunday included; but for the three year since here I've been on this crossin', I niver took tin shillin', sir, niver.

"Yes, there was a man here before me: he had bad eyes, and he was obligated to lave and go into the worrukhouse; he lost the sight of one of his eyes when he came back again. I knew him sweepin' here a long time. When he come back, I said, 'Father,' says I, 'I wint on your crossin'.' 'Ah,' says he, 'you've got a bad crossin', poor woman; I wouldn't go on it again, I wouldn't;' and I niver seen him since. I don't know whether he is living or not.

"A wit day makes fourpence or fippence difference sometimes.

"Indeed, I have heard of crossin'-sweepers makin' so much and so much. I hear people talkin' about it, but, for my parrut, I wouldn't give heed to what they say. In Oxford-street, towards the Parruks, there was a man, years ago, they say, by all accounts left a dale of money.

"I am niver annoyed by boys. I don't spake to none of them. I was in sarvice till I got married, thin I used to sill fruit through Kentish Town, Highgate, and Hampstead; but I niver sould in the streets, sir, and had my rigular customers like any greengrocer. I had a good connixion, I had; but, by gitting old and feeble, and sick, and not being able to go about, I was forrussed to give it up, I was. I couldn't carry twelve pound upon my hid—no, not if I was to get a sov'rin a-day for it, now.

"I niver lave the crossin'. I haven't got a frind; nor a day's pleasure I niver take.

"Oh, yes, sir, I must have a pinch—this is my snuff-box. I take a ha'porth a-day, and that's the only comforrut I've got—that and a cup of tay; for I can't dthrink cocoa or coffee-tay.

"My feeding is a bit of brid and butther. I haven't bought a bit of mate these three months. I used to git two penn'orth of bones and mate at Mrs. Baker's, down there; but mate is so dear, that they don't have 'em now, and it's ashamed I am of botherin' thim so often. I frequintly have a hirrin'. Oh dear! no sir. Wather is my dthrink. I can't afforrud no beer. Sometimes I have a penn'orth of gin and could water, and I find it do me a worruld of good. Sometimes I git enough to eat, but lately, indeed, I can't git that. I declare I don't know which people give the most; the gintlemen give me more in wit wither, for then the ladies, you see, can't let their dresses out of their hands.

"I am a Catholic, sir. I go to St. Pathrick's sometimes, or I go to Gordon-street Churruch. I don't care which I go to—it's all the same to me; but I haven't been to churruch for months. I've nothing to charge mysilf wid; and, indeed, I haven't been to confission for some year.

"Tradespeople are very kind, indeed they are.

"Yes, I think I'll go to Kint a hop-pickin'; and as for my crossin', I lave it, sir, just as it is. I go five miles beyant Maidstone. I worruked fifteen years at Mr. ——; he was a pole-puller and binsman in the hop-ground.

"I've not been down there since the year before last. I was too poorly after that accident. We make about eighteenpence, two shillin's, or one shillin', 'cording as the hops is good. No lodging nor fire to pay; and we git plinty of good milk chape there. I manage thin to save a little money to hilp us in the winther.

"I live in —— street, Siven Dials; but I'm going to lave my son—we can't agree. We live in the two-pair back. I pay nothing a-week, only bring home ivery ha'penny to hilp thim. Sometimes I spind a pinny or tuppence out on mysilf.

"My son is doin' very badly. He sills fruit in the sthreets; but he's niver been used to it before; and he has pains in his limbs with so much walking. He has no connixion, and with the sthrawbirries now he's forrused to walk about of a night as will as a day, for they won't keep till the morrunning; they all go mouldy and bad. My son has been used to the bricklaying, sir: he can lit in a stove or a copper, or do a bit of plasther or lath, or the like. His wife is a very just, clane, sober woman, and he has got three good childer; there is Catherine, who is named afther me, she is nearly five; Illen, two years and six months, named after her mother; and Margaret, the baby, six months ould—and she is called afther my daughter, who is did."

4. The Occasional Crossing-Sweepers.

The Sunday Crossing-Sweeper.

"I'm a Sunday crossing-sweeper," said an oyster-stall keeper, in answer to my inquiries. "I mean by that, I only sweep a crossing on a Sunday. I pitch in the Lorrimore-road, Newington, with a few oysters on week-days, and I does jobs for the people about there, sich as cleaning a few knives and forks, or shoes and boots, and windows. I've been in the habit of sweeping a crossing about four or five years.

"I never knowed my father, he died when I was a baby. He was a 'terpreter, and spoke seven different languages. My father used to go with Bonaparte's army, and used to 'terpret for him. He died in the South of France. I had a brother, but he died quite a child, and my mother supported me and a sister by being cook in a gentleman's family: we was put out to nurse. My mother couldn't afford to put me to school, and so I can't read nor write. I'm forty-one years old.

"The fust work I ever did was being boy at a pork-butcher's. I used to take out the meat wot was ordered. At last my master got broke up, and I was discharged from my place, and I took to sellin' a few sprats. I had no thoughts of taking to a crossing then. I was ten year old. I remember I give two shillings for a 'shallow;' that's a flat basket with two handles; they put 'em a top of 'well-baskets,' them as can carry a good load. A well-basket's almost like a coffin; it's a long un like a shallow, on'y it's a good deal deeper—about as deep as a washin' tub. I done very fair with my sprats till they got dear and come up very small, so then I was obliged to get a few plaice, and then I got a few baked 'taters and sold them. I hadn't money enough to buy a tin—I could a got one for eight shillings—so I put 'em in a cross-handle basket, and carried 'em round the streets, and into public-houses, and cried "Baked taters, all hot!' I used only to do this of a night, and it brought me about four or five shillings a-week. I used to fill up the day by going round to gentlemen's houses where I was known, to run for errands and clean knives and boots, and that brought me sich a thing as four shillings a-week more altogether.

"I never had no idea then of sweeping a crossing of a Sunday; but at last I was obliged to push to it. I kept on like this for many years, and at last a gentleman named Mr. Jackson promised to buy me a tin, but he died. My mother went blind through a blight; that was the cause of my fust going out to work, and so I had to keep her; but I didn't mind that: I thought it was my duty so to do.

"About ten years ago I got married; my wife used to go out washing and ironing. I thought two of us would get on better than one, and she didn't mind helpin' me to keep my mother, for I was determined my mother shouldn't go into the workhouse so long as I could help it.

"A year or two after I got married, I found I must do something more to help to keep home, and then I fust thought of sweepin' a crossing on Sundays; so I bought a heath broom for twopence-ha'penny, and I pitched agin' the Canterbury Arms, Kennington; it was between a baker's shop and a public-house and butcher's; they told me they'd all give me something if I'd sweep the crossing reg'lar.

"The best places is in front of chapels and churches, 'cause you can take more money in front of a church or a chapel than wot you can in a private road, 'cos they look at it more, and a good many thinks when you sweeps in front of a public-house that you go and spend your money inside in waste.

"The first Sunday I went at it, I took eighteenpence. I began at nine o'clock in the morning and stopped till four in the afternoon. The publican give fourpence, and the baker sixpence, and the butcher threepence, so that altogether I got above a half-crown. I stopped at this crossing a year, and I always knocked up about two shillings or a half-crown on the Sunday. I very seldom got anythink from the ladies; it was most all give by the gentlemen. Little children used sometimes to give me ha'pence, but it was when their father give it to 'em; the little children like to do that sort of thing.

"The way I come to leave this crossing was this here: the road was being repaired, and they shot down a lot of stones, so then I couldn't sweep no crossing. I looked out for another place, and I went opposite the Duke of Sutherland public-house in the Lorrimore-road. I swept there one Sunday, and I got about one-and-sixpence. While I was sweeping this crossing, a gentleman comes up to me, and he axes me if I ever goes to chapel or church; and I tells him, 'Yes;' I goes to church, wot I'd been brought up to; and then he says, 'You let me see you at St. Michael's Church, Brixton, and I'll 'courage you, and you'll do better if you come up and sweep in front there of a Sunday instead of where you are; you'll be sure to get more money, and get better 'couraged. It don't matter what you do,' he says, 'as long as it brings you in a honest crust; anythink's better than thieving.' And then the gent gives me sixpence and goes away.

"As soon as he'd gone I started off to his church, and got there just after the people was all in. I left my broom in the churchyard. When I got inside the church, I could see him a-sitten jest agin the communion table, so I walks to the free seats and sets down right close again the communion table myself, for his pew was on my right, and he saw me directly and looked and smiled at me. As he was coming out of the church he says, says he, 'As long as I live, if you comes here on a Sunday reg'lar I shall always 'courage you.'

"The next Sunday I went up to the church and swept the crossing, and he see me there, but he didn't give me nothink till the church was over, and then he gave me a shilling, and the other people give me about one-and-sixpence; so I got about two-and-sixpence altogether, and I thought that was a good beginning.

"The next Sunday the gen'elman was ill, but he didn't forget me. He sent me sixpence by his servant, and I got from the other people about two shillings more. I never see that gentleman, after for he died on the Saturday. His wife sent for me on the Sunday; she was ill a-bed, and I see one of the daughters, and she gave me sixpence, and said I was to be there on Monday morning. I went on the Monday, and the lady was much worse, and I see the daughter again. She gave me a couple of shirts, and told me to come on the Friday, and when I went on that day I found the old lady was dead. The daughter gave me a coat, and trousers, and waistcoat.

"After the daughters had buried the father and mother they moved. I kept on sweeping at the church, till at last things got so bad that I come away, for nobody give me nothink. The houses about there was so damp that people wouldn't live in 'em.

"So then I come up into Lorrimore-road, and there I've been ever since. I don't get on wonderful well there. Sometimes I don't get above sixpence all day, but it's mostly a shilling or so. The most I've took is about one-and-sixpence. The reason why I stop there is, because I'm known there, you see. I stands there all the week selling highsters, and the people about there give me a good many jobs. Besides, the road is rather bad there, and they like to have a clean crossing of a Sunday.

"I don't get any more money in the winter (though it's muddier) than I do in the summer; the reason is, 'cause there isn't so many people stirring about in the winter as there is in the summer.

"One broom will carry me over three Sundays, and I gives twopence-ha'penny a-piece for 'em. Sometimes the people bring me out at my crossing—'specially in cold weather—a mug of hot tea and some bread and butter, or a bit of meat. I don't know any other crossing-sweeper; I never 'sociates with nobody. I always keeps my own counsel, and likes my own company the best.

"My wife's been dead five months, and my mother six months; but I've got a little boy seven year old; he stops at school all day till I go home at night, and then I fetches him home. I mean to do something better with him than give him a broom: a good many people would set him on a crossing; but I mean to keep him at school. I want to see him read and write well, because he'll suit for a place then.

"There's some art in sweeping a crossing even. That is, you mustn't sweep too hard, 'cos if you do, you wears a hole right in the road, and then the water hangs in it. It's the same as sweeping a path; if you sweeps too hard you wears up the stones.

"To do it properly, you must put the end of the broom-handle in the palm of your right hand, and lay hold of it with your left, about half way down; then you takes half your crossing, and sweeps on one side till you gets over the road; then you turns round and comes back doing the other half. Some people holds the broom before 'em, and keeps swaying it back-'ards and for'ards to sweep the width of the crossing all in one stroke, but that ain't sich a good plan, 'cause you're apt to splash people that's coming by; and besides, it wears the road in holes and wears out the broom so quick. I always use my broom steady. I never splash nobody.

"I never tried myself, but I've seen some crossin'-sweepers as could do all manner of things in mud, sich as diamonds, and stars, and the moon, and letters of the alphabet; and once in Oxford-street I see our Saviour on his cross in mud, and it was done well, too. The figure wasn't done with the broom, it was done with a pointed piece of stick; it was a boy as I see doin' it, about fifteen. He didn't seem to take much money while I was a-looking at him.

"I don't think I should a took to crossin' sweeping if I hadn't got married; but when I'd got a couple of children (for I've had a girl die; if she'd lived she'd a been eight year old now,) I found I must do a somethin', and so I took to the broom."

B. *The Afflicted Crossing-Sweepers.*

The Wooden-legged Sweeper.

This man lives up a little court running out of a wide, second-rate street. It is a small court, consisting of some half-dozen houses, all of them what are called by courtesy "private."

I inquired at No. 3 for John ——; "The first-floor back, if you please, sir;" and to the first-floor back I went.

Here I was answered by a good-looking and intelligent young woman, with a baby, who said her husband had not yet come home, but would I walk in and wait? I did so; and found myself in a very small, close room, with a little furniture, which the man called "his few sticks," and presently discovered another child—a little girl. The girl was very shy in her manner, being only two years and two months old, and as her mother said, very ailing from the difficulty of cutting her teeth, though the true cause seemed to be want of proper nourishment and fresh air. The baby was a boy—a fine, cheerful, good-tempered little fellow, but rather pale, and with an unnaturally large forehead. The mantelpiece of the room was filled with little ornaments of various sorts, such as bead-baskets, and over them hung a series of black profiles—not portraits of either the crossing-sweeper or any of his family, but an odd lot of heads, which had lost their owners many a year, and served, in company with a little red, green, and yellow scripture-piece, to keep the wall from looking bare. Over the door (inside the

room) was nailed a horse-shoe, which, the wife told me, had been put there by her husband, for luck.

A bed, two deal tables, a couple of boxes, and three chairs, formed the entire furniture of the room, and nearly filled it. On the window-frame was hung a small shaving-glass; and on the two boxes stood a wicker-work apology for a perambulator, in which I learnt the poor crippled man took out his only daughter at half-past four in the morning.

"If some people was to see that, sir," said the sweeper, when he entered and saw me looking at it, "they would, and in fact they *do* say, 'Why, you can't be in want.' Ah! little they know how we starved and pinched ourselves before we could get it."

There was a fire in the room, notwithstanding the day was very hot; but the window was wide open, and the place tolerably ventilated, though oppressive. I have been in many poor people's "places," but never remember one so poor in its appointments and yet so free from effluvia.

The crossing-sweeper himself was a very civil sort of man, and in answer to my inquiries said:—

"I know that I do as I ought to, and so I don't feel hurt at standing at my crossing. I have been there four years. I found the place vacant. My wife, though she looks very well, will never be able to do any hard work; so we sold our mangle, and I took to the crossing: but we're not in debt, and nobody can't say nothing to us. I like to go along the streets free of such remarks as is made by people to whom you owes money. I had a mangle in —— Yard, but through my wife's weakness I was forced to part with it. I was on the crossing a short time before that, for I knew that if I parted with my mangle and things before I knew whether I could get a living at the crossing I couldn't get my mangle back again.

"We sold the mangle only for a sovereign, and we gave two-pound-ten for it; we sold it to the same man that we bought it of. About six months ago I managed for to screw and save enough to buy that little wicker chaise, for I can't carry the children because of my one leg, and of course the mother can't carry them both out together. There was a man had the crossing I've got; he died three or four years before I took it; but he didn't depend on the crossing—he did things for the tradespeople about, such as carpet-beating, messages, and so on.

"When I first took the crossing I did very well. It happened to be a very nasty, dirty season, and I took a good deal of money. Sweepers are not always civil, sir.

"I wish I had gone to one of the squares, though. But I think after —— street is paved with stone I shall do better. I am certain I never taste a bit of meat from one week's end to the other. The best day I ever made was five-and-sixpence or six shillings; it was the winter before last. If you remember, the snow laid very thick on the ground, and the sudden thaw made walking so uncomfortable, that I did very well. I have taken as little as sixpence, fourpence, and even twopence. Last Thursday I took two ha'pence all day. Take one week with the other, seven or eight shillings is the very outside.

"I don't know how it is, but some people who used to give me a penny, don't now. The boys who come in wet weather earn a great deal more than I do. I once lost a good chance, sir, at the corner of the street leading to Cavendish-square. There's a bank, and they pay a man seven shillings a-week to sweep the crossing: a butcher in Oxford Market spoke for me; but when I went up, it unfortunately turned out that I was not fit, from the loss of my leg. The last man they had there they were obliged to turn away—he was so given to drink.

"I think there are some rich crossing-sweepers in the city, about the Exchange; but you won't find them now during this dry weather, except in by-places. In wet weather, there are two or three boys who sweep near my crossing, and take all my earnings away. There's a great able-bodied man besides—a fellow strong enough to follow the plough. I said to the policeman, 'Now, ain't this a shame? and the policeman said, 'Well, *he* must get his living as well as you.' I'm always civil to the police, and they're always civil to me—in fact, I think sometimes I'm too civil—I'm not rough enough with people.

"You soon tell whether to have any hopes of people coming across. I can tell a gentleman directly I see him.

"Where I stand, sir, I could get people in trouble everlasting; there's all sorts of thieving going on. I saw the other day two or three respectable persons take a purse out of an old lady's pocket before the baker's shop at the corner; but I can't say a word, or they would come and throw me into the road. If a gentleman gives me sixpence, he don't give me any more for three weeks or a month; but I don't think I've more than three or four gentlemen as gives me that. Well, you can scarcely tell the gentleman from the clerk, the clerks are such great swells now.

"Lawyers themselves dress very plain; those great men who don't come every day, because they've clerks to do their business for them, they give most. People hardly ever stop to speak unless it is to ask you where places are—you might be occupied at that all day. I manage to pay my rent out of what I take on Sunday, but not lately—this weather religious people go pleasuring.

"No, I don't go now—the fact is, I'd like to go to church, if I could, but when I come home I am tired; but I've got books here, and they do as well, sir. I read a little and write a little.

"I lost my leg through a swelling—there

was no chloroform then. I was in the hospital three years and a half, and was about fifteen or sixteen when I had it off. I always feel the sensation of the foot, and more so at change of weather. I feel my toes moving about, and everything; sometimes, it's just as if the calf of my leg was itching. I *feel* the rain coming; when I see a cloud coming my leg shoots, and I know we shall have rain.

"My mother was a laundress—my father has been dead nineteen years my last birthday. My mother was subject to fits, so I was forced to stop at home to take care of the business.

"I don't want to get on better, but I always think, if sickness or anything comes on——

"I am at my crossing at half-past eight; at half-past eleven I come home to dinner. I go back at one or two till seven.

"Sometimes I mind horses and carts, but the boys get all that business. One of these little customers got sixpence the other day for only opening the door of a cab. I don't know how it is they let these little boys be about; if I was the police, I wouldn't allow it.

"I think it's a blessing, having children—(referring to his little girl)—that child wants the gravy of meat, or an egg beaten up, but she can't get it. I take her out every morning round Euston-square and those open places. I get out about half-past four. It is early, but if it benefits her, that's no odds."

ONE-LEGGED SWEEPER AT CHANCERY-LANE.

"I DON'T know what induced me to take that crossing, except it was that no one was there, and the traffic was so good—fact is, the traffic is too good, and people won't stop as they cross over, they're very glad to get out of the way of the cabs and the omnibuses.

"Tradespeople never give me anything—not even a bit of bread. The only thing I get is a few cuttings, such as crusts of sandwiches and remains of cheese, from the public-house at the corner of the court. The tradespeople are as distant to me now as they were when I came, but if I should pitch up a tale I should soon get acquainted with them.

"We have lived in this lodging two years and a half, and we pay one-and-ninepence a-week, as you may see from the rent-book, and that I manage to earn on Sundays. We owe four weeks now, and, thank God, it's no more.

"I was born, sir, in —— street, Berkeley-square, at Lord ———'s house, when my mother was minding the house. I have been used to London all my life, but not to this part; I have always been at the west-end, which is what I call the best end.

"I did not like the idea of crossing-sweeping at first, till I reasoned with myself, Why should I mind? I'm not doing any hurt to anybody. I don't care at all now—I know I'm doing what I ought to do.

"A man had better be killed out of the way than be disabled. It's not pleasant to know that my wife is suckling that great child, and, though she is so weakly, she can't get no meat.

"I've been knocked down twice, sir—both times by cabs. The last time it was a fortnight before I could get about comfortably again. The fool of a fellow was coming along, not looking at his horse, but talking to somebody on the cab-rank. The place was as free as this room, if he had only been looking before him. Nobody hollered till I was down, but plenty hollered then. Ah, I often notice such carelessness—it's really shameful. I don't think those 'shofuls' (Hansoms) should be allowed—the fact is, if the driver is not a tall man he can't see his horse's head.

"A nasty place is end of —— street: it narrows so suddenly. There's more confusion and more bother about it than any place in London. When two cabs gets in at once, one one way and one the other, there's sure to be a row to know which was the first in."

THE MOST SEVERELY-AFFLICTED OF ALL THE CROSSING-SWEEPERS.

PASSING the dreary portico of the Queen's Theatre, and turning to the right down Tottenham Mews, we came upon a flight of steps leading up to what is called "The Gallery," where an old man, gasping from the effects of a lung disease, and feebly polishing some old harness, proclaimed himself the father of the sweeper I was in search of, and ushered me into the room where he lay a-bed, having had a "very bad night."

The room itself was large and of a low pitch, stretching over some stables; it was very old and creaky (the sweeper called it "an old wilderness"), and contained, in addition to two turn-up bedsteads, that curious medley of articles which, in the course of years, an old and poor couple always manage to gather up. There was a large lithograph of a horse, dear to the remembrance of the old man from an indication of a dog in the corner. "The very spit of the one I had for years; it's a real portrait, sir, for Mr. Hanbart, the printer, met me one day and sketched him." There was an etching of Hogarth's in a black frame; a stuffed bird in a wooden case, with a glass before it; a piece of painted glass, hanging in a place of honour, but for which no name could be remembered, excepting that it was "of the old-fashioned sort." There were the odd remnants, too, of old china ornaments, but very little furniture; and, finally, a kitten.

The father, worn out and consumptive, had been groom to Lord Combermere. "I was with him, sir, when he took Bonyparte's house at Malmasong. I could have had a pension then if I'd a liked, but I was young and foolish, and had plenty of money, and we never know what we may come to."

The sweeper, although a middle-aged man,

had all the appearance of a boy—his raw-looking eyes, which he was always wiping with a piece of linen rag, gave him a forbidding expression, which his shapeless, short, bridgeless nose tended to increase. But his manners and habits were as simple in their character as those of a child; and he spoke of his father's being angry with him for not getting up before, as if he were a little boy talking of his nurse.

He walks, with great difficulty, by the help of a crutch; and the sight of his weak eyes, his withered limb, and his broken shoulder (his old helpless mother, and his gasping, almost inaudible father,) form a most painful subject for compassion.

The crossing-sweeper gave me, with no little meekness and some slight intelligence, the following statement:—

"I very seldom go out on a crossin' o' Sundays. I didn't do much good at it. I used to go to church of a Sunday—in fact, I do now when I'm well enough.

"It's fifteen year next January since I left Regent-street. I was there three years, and then I went on Sundays occasionally. Sometimes I used to get a shilling, but I have given it up now—it didn't answer; besides, a lady who was kind to me found me out, and said she wouldn't do any more for me if I went out on Sundays. She's been dead these three or four years now.

"When I was at Regent-street I might have made twelve shillings a-week, or something thereabout.

"I am seven-and-thirty the 26th day of last month, and I have been lame six-and-twenty years. My eyes have been bad ever since my birth. The scrofulous disease it was that lamed me—it come with a swelling on the knee, and the outside wound broke about the size of a crown piece, and a piece of bone come from it; then it gathered in the inside and at the top. I didn't go into the hospital then, but I was an out-patient, for the doctor said a close confined place wouldn't do me no good. He said that the seaside would, though; but my parents couldn't afford to send me, and that's how it is. I *did* go to Brighton and Margate nine years after my leg was bad, but it was too late then.

"I have been in Middlesex Hospital, with a broken collar-bone, when I was knocked down by a cab. I was in a fortnight there, and I was in again when I hurt my leg. I was sweeping my crossin' when the top came off my crutch. I fell back'ards, and my leg doubled under me. They had to carry me there.

"I went into the Middlesex Hospital for my eyes and leg. I was in a month, but they wouldn't keep me long, there's no cure for me.

"My leg is very painful, 'specially at change of weather. Sometimes I don't get an hour's sleep of a night—it was daylight this morning before I closed my eyes.

"I went on the crossing first because my parents couldn't keep me, not being able to keep theirselves. I thought it was the best thing I could do, but it's like all other things, it's got very bad now. I used to manage to rub along at first—the streets have got shockin' bad of late.

"To tell the truth, I was turned away from Regent-street by Mr. Cook, the furrier, corner of Argyle Street. I'll tell you as far as I was told. He called me into his passage one night, and said I must look out for another crossin', for a lady, who was a very good customer of his, refused to come while I was there; my heavy afflictions was such that she didn't like the look of me. I said, 'Very well;' but because I come there next day and the day after that, he got the policeman to turn me away. Certainly the policeman acted very kindly, but he said the gentleman wanted me removed, and I must find another crossing.

"Then I went down Charlotte-street, opposite Percy Chapel, at the corner of Windmill-street. After that I went to Wells-street, by getting permission of the doctor at the corner. He thought that it would be better for me than Charlotte-street, so he let me come.

"Ah! there ain't so many crossing-sweepers as there was; I think they've done away with a great many of them.

"When I first went to Wells-street, I did pretty well, because there was a dress-maker's at the corner, and I used to get a good deal from the carriages that stopped before the door. I used to take five or six shillings in a day then, and I don't take so much in a week now. I tell you what I made this week. I've made one-and-fourpence, but it's been so wet, and people are out of town; but, of course, it's not always alike—sometimes I get three-and-sixpence or four shillings. Some people gives me a sixpence or a fourpenny-bit; I reckons that all in.

"I am dreadful tired when I comes home of a night. Thank God my other leg's all right! I wish the t'other was as strong, but it never will be now.

"The police never try to turn me away; they're very friendly, they'll pass the time of day with me, or that, from knowing me so long in Oxford-street.

"My broom sometimes serves me a month; of course, they don't last long now it's showery weather. I give twopence-halfpenny a piece for 'em, or threepence.

"I don't know who gives me the most; my eyes are so bad I can't see. I think, though, upon an average, the gentlemen give most.

"Often I hear the children, as they are going by, ask their mothers for something to give to me; but they only say, 'Come along—come along!' It's very rare that they lets the children have a ha'penny to give me.

"My mother is seventy the week before next Christmas. She can't do much now; she does though go out on Wednesdays or Saturdays, but that's to people she's known for years who is attached to her. She does her work there just as she likes.

"Sometimes she gets a little washing—sometimes not. This week she had a little, and was forced to dry it indoors; but that makes 'em half dirty again.

"My father's breath is so bad that he can't do anything except little odd jobs for people down here; but they've got the knack now, a good many on 'em, of doin' their own.

"We have lived here fifteen years next September; it's a long time to live in such an old wilderness, but my old mother is a sort of woman as don't like movin' about, and I don't like it. Some people are everlasting on the move.

"When I'm not on my crossin' I sit poking at home, or make a job of mending my clothes. I mended these trousers in two or three places.

"It's all done by feel, sir. My mother says it's a good thing we've got our feeling at least, if we haven't got our eyesight."

The Negro Crossing-Sweeper, who had lost both his Legs.

This man sweeps a crossing in a principal and central thoroughfare when the weather is cold enough to let him walk; the colder the better, he says, as it "numbs his stumps like." He is unable to follow this occupation in warm weather, as his legs feel "just like corns," and he cannot walk more than a mile a-day. Under these circumstances he takes to begging, which he thinks he has a perfect right to do, as he has been left destitute in what is to him almost a strange country, and has been denied what he terms "his rights." He generally sits while begging, dressed in a sailor shirt and trousers, with a black neckerchief round his neck, tied in the usual nautical knot. He places before him the placard which is given beneath, and never moves a muscle for the purpose of soliciting charity. He always appears scrupulously clean.

I went to see him at his home early one morning—in fact, at half-past eight, but he was not then up. I went again at nine, and found him prepared for my visit in a little parlour, in a dirty and rather disreputable alley running out of a court in a street near Brunswick-square. The negro's parlour was scantily furnished with two chairs, a turn-up bedstead, and a sea-chest. A few odds and ends of crockery stood on the sideboard, and a kettle was singing over a cheerful bit of fire. The little man was seated on a chair, with his stumps of legs sticking straight out. He showed some amount of intelligence in answering my questions. We were quite alone, for he sent his wife and child—the former a pleasant-looking "half-caste," and the latter the cheeriest little crowing, smiling "piccaninny" I have ever seen—he sent them out into the alley, while I conversed with himself.

His life is embittered by the idea that he has never yet had "his rights"—that the owners of the ship in which his legs were burnt off have not paid him his wages (of which, indeed, he says, he never received any but the five pounds which he had in advance before starting), and that he has been robbed of 42*l.* by a grocer in Glasgow. How true these statements may be it is almost impossible to say, but from what he says, some injustice seems to have been done him by the canny Scotchman, who refuses him his "pay," without which he is determined "never to leave the country."

"I was on that crossing," he said, "almost the whole of last winter. It was very cold, and I had nothing at all to do; so, as I passed there, I asked the gentleman at the baccer-shop, as well as the gentleman at the office, and I asked at the boot-shop, too, if they would let me sweep there. The policeman wanted to turn me away, but I went to the gentleman inside the office, and he told the policeman to leave me alone. The policeman said first, 'You must go away,' but I said, 'I couldn't do anything else, and he ought to think it a charity to let me stop.'

"I don't stop in London very long, though, at a time; I go to Glasgow, in Scotland, where the owners of the ship in which my legs were burnt off live. I served nine years in the merchant service and the navy. I was born in Kingston, in Jamaica; it is an English place, sir, so I am counted as not a foreigner. I'm different from them Lascars. I went to sea when I was only nine years old. The owners is in London who had that ship. I was cabin-boy; and after I had served my time I became cook, or when I couldn't get the place of cook I went before the mast. I went as head cook in 1851, in the *Madeira* barque; she used to be a West Indy trader, and to trade out when I belonged to her. We got down to 69 south of Cape Horn; and there we got almost froze and perished to death. That is the book what I sell."

The "Book" (as he calls it) consists of eight pages, printed on paper the size of a sheet of note paper; it is entitled—

"BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF

EDWARD ALBERT!

A native of Kingston, Jamaica.

Showing the hardships he underwent and the sufferings he endured in having both legs amputated.

HULL:

W. HOWE, PRINTER."

It is embellished with a portrait of a black man, which has evidently been in its time a comic "nigger" of the Jim-Crow tobacco-paper kind, as is evidenced by the traces of a tobacco-pipe, which has been unskilfully erased.

The "Book" itself is concocted from an affidavit made by Edward Albert before "P. Mackinlay, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the country (so it is printed) of Lanark."

I have seen the affidavit, and it is almost identical with the statement in the "book," excepting in the matter of grammar, which has rather suffered on its road to Mr. Howe, the printer.

The following will give an idea of the matter of which it is composed:—

"In February, 1851, I engaged to serve as cook on board the barque *Madeira*, of Glasgow, Captain J. Douglas, on her voyage from Glasgow to California, thence to China, and thence home to a port of discharge in the United Kingdom. I signed articles, and delivered up my register-ticket as a British seaman, as required by law. I entered the service on board the said vessel, under the said engagement, and sailed with that vessel on the 18th of February, 1851. I discharged my duty as cook on board the said vessel, from the date of its having left the Clyde, until June the same year, in which month the vessed rounded Cape Horne, at that time my legs became frost bitten, and I became in consequence unfit for duty.

"In the course of the next day after my limbs became affected, the master of the vessel, and mate, took me to the ship's oven, in order, as they said, to cure me; the oven was hot at the time, a fowl that was roasting therein having been removed in order to make room for my feet, which was put into the oven; in consequence of the treatment, my feet burst through the intense swelling, and mortification ensued.

"The vessel called, six weeks after, at Valpariso, and I was there taken to an hospital, where I remained five months and a half. Both my legs were amputated three inches below my knees soon after I went to the hospital at Valpariso. I asked my master for my wages due to me, for my service on board the vessel, and demanded my register-ticket; when the captain told me I should not recover, that the vessel could not wait for me, and that I was a dead man, and that he could not discharge a dead man; and that he also said, that as I had no friends there to get my money, he would only put a little money into the hands of the consul, which would be applied in burying me. On being discharged from the hospital I called on the consul, and was informed by him that master had not left any money.

"I was afterwards taken on board one of her Majesty's ships, the *Driver*, Captain Charles Johnston, and landed at Portsmouth; from thence I got a passage to Glasgow, ware I remained three months. Upon supplication to the register-office for seamen, in London, my register-ticket has been forwarded to the Collector of Customs, Glasgow; and he his ready to deliver it to me upon obtaining the authority of the Justices of the Peace, and I recovered the same under the 22nd section of the General Merchant Seaman's Act. Declares I cannot write.

"(Signed) DAVID MACKINLAY, J. P.

"The Justices having considered the foregoing information and declaration, finds that Edward Albert, therein named the last-register ticket, sought to be covered under circumstances which, so far as he was concerned, were unavoidable, and that no fraud was intended or committed by him in reference thereto, therefore authorised the Collector and Comptroller of Customs at the port of Glasgow to deliver to the said Edward Albert the register-ticket, sought to be recovered by him all in terms of 22nd section of the General Merchant Seamen's Act.

"(Signed) DAVID MACKINLAY, J. P.

"Glasgow, Oct. 6th, 1852.

"Register Ticket, No. 512, 652, age 25 years."

"I could make a large book of my sufferings, sir, if I liked," he said, "and I will disgrace the owners of that ship as long as they don't give me what they owe me.

"I will never leave England or Scotland until I get my rights; but they says money makes money, and if I had money I could get it. If they would only give me what they owe me, I wouldn't ask anybody for a farthing, God knows, sir. I don't know why the master put my feet in the oven; he said to cure me: the agony of pain I was in was such, he said, that it must be done.

"The loss of my limbs is bad enough, but it's still worse when you can't get what is your rights, nor anything for the sweat that they worked out of me.

"After I went down to Glasgow for my money I opened a little coffee-house; it was called 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' I did very well. The man who sold me tea and coffee said he would get me on, and I had better give my money to him to keep safe, and he used to put it away in a tin box which I had given four-and-sixpence for. He advertised my place in the papers, and I did a good business. I had the place open a month, when he kept all my savings—two-and-forty pounds—and shut up the place, and denied me of it, and I never got a farthing.

"I declare to you I can't describe the agony I felt when my legs were burst; I fainted away over and over again. There was four men came; I was lying in my hammock, and they moved the fowl that was roasting, and put my legs in the oven. There they held me for ten minutes. They said it would take the cold out; but after I came out the cold caught 'em again, and the next day they swole up as big round as a pillar, and burst, and then like water come out. No man but God knows what I have suffered and went through.

"By the order of the doctor at Valparaiso, the sick patients had to come out of the room I went into; the smell was so bad I couldn't bear it myself—it was all mortification—they had to use chloride o' zinc to keep the smell down. They tried to save one leg, but the mortification was getting up into my body. I got better after my legs were off.

"I was three months good before I could turn, or able to lift up my hand to my head. I was glad to move after that time, it was a regular relief to me; if it wasn't for good attendance, I should not have lived. You know they don't allow tobaccer in a hospital, but I had it; it was the only thing I cared for. The Reverend Mr. Armstrong used to bring me a pound a fortnight; he used to bring it regular. I never used to smoke before; they said I never should recover, but after I got the tobaccer it seemed to soothe me. I was five months and a half in that place.

"Admiral Moseley, of the *Thetis* frigate, sent me home; and the reason why he sent me home was, that after I came well, I called on Mr. Rouse, the English consul, and he sent me to the boarding-house, till such time as he could find a ship to send me home in. I was there about two months, and the boarding-master, Jan Pace, sent me to the consul.

"I used to get about a little, with two small crutches, and I also had a little cart before that, on three wheels; it was made by a man in the hospital. I used to lash myself down in it. That was the best thing I ever had—I could get about best in that.

"Well, I went to the consul, and when I went to him, he says, 'I can't pay your board; you must beg and pay for it;' so I went and told Jan Pace, and he said, 'If you had stopped here a hundred years, I would not turn you out;' and then I asked Pace to tell me where the Admiral lived. 'What do you want with him?' says he. I said, 'I think the Admiral must be higher than the consul.' Pace slapped me on the back. Says he, 'I'm glad to see you've got the pluck to complain to the Admiral.'

"I went down at nine o'clock the next morning, to see the Admiral. He said, 'Well, Prince Albert, how are you getting on?' So I told him I was getting on very bad; and then I told him all about the consul; and he said, as long as he stopped he would see me righted, and took me on board his ship, the *Thetis;* and he wrote to the consul, and said to me, 'If the consul sends for you, don't you go to him; tell him you have no legs to walk, and he must walk to you.'

"The consul wanted to send me back in a merchant ship, but the Admiral wouldn't have it, so I came in the *Driver*, one of Her Majesty's vessels. It was the 8th of May, 1852, when I got to Portsmouth.

"I stopped a little while—about a week—in Portsmouth. I went to the Admiral of the dockyard, and he told me I must go to the Lord Mayor of London. So I paid my passage to London, saw the Lord Mayor, who sent me to Mr. Yardley, the magistrate, and he advertised the case for me, and I got four pounds fifteen shillings, besides my passage to Glasgow. After I got there, I went to Mr. Symee a Custom-house officer (he'd been in the same ship with me to California); he said, 'Oh, gracious, Edward, how have you lost your limbs!' and I burst out a crying. I told him all about it. He advised me to go to the owner. I went there; but the policeman in London had put my name down as Robert Thorpe, which was the man I lodged with; so they denied me.

"I went to the shipping office, where they reckonised me; and I went to Mr. Symee again, and he told me to go before the Lord Mayor (a Lord Provost they call him in Scotland), and make an affidavit; and so, when they found my story was right, they sent to London for my seaman's ticket; but they couldn't do anything, because the captain was not there.

"When I got back to London, I commenced sweeping the crossin', sir. I only sweep it in the winter, because I can't stand in the summer. Oh, yes, I feel my feet still: it is just as if I had them sitting on the floor, now. I feel my toes moving, like as if I had 'em. I could count them, the whole ten, whenever I work my knees. I had a corn on one of my toes, and I can feel it still, particularly at the change of weather.

"Sometimes I might get two shillings a-day at my crossing, sometimes one shilling and sixpence, sometimes I don't take above sixpence. The most I ever made in one day was three shillings and sixpence, but that's very seldom.

"I am a very steady man. I don't drink what money I get; and if I had the means to get something to do, I'd keep off the streets.

"When I offered to go to the parish, they told me to go to Scotland, to spite the men who owed me my wages.

"Many people tell me I ought to go to my country; but I tell them it's very hard—I didn't come here without my legs—I lost them, as it were, in this country; but if I had lost them in my own country, I should have been better off. I should have gone down to the magistrate every Friday, and have taken my ten shillings.

"I went to the Merchant Seaman's Fund, and they said that those who got hurted before 1852 have been getting the funds, but those who were hurted after 1852 couldn't get nothing—it was stopped in '51, and the merchants wouldn't pay any more, and don't pay any more.

"That's scandalous, because, whether you're willing or not, you must pay two shillings a-month (one shilling a-month for the hospital fees, and one shilling a-month to the Merchant Seaman's Fund), out of your pay.

"I am married: my wife is the same colour as me, but an Englishwoman. I've been married two years. I married her from where she belonged, in Leeds. I couldn't get on to do anything without her. Sometimes she goes out and sells things—fruit, and so on—but she don't make much. With the assistance of my wife, if I could get my money, I would set up in the same line of business as before, in a coffee-shop. If I had three pounds I could do it: it took well in Scotland. I am not a common cook, either; I am a pastrycook. I used to make all the sorts of cakes they have in the shops. I bought the shapes, and tins, and things to make them proper.

"I'll tell you how I did—there was a kind of apparatus; it boils water and coffee, and the milk and the tea, in different departments; but you couldn't see the divisions—the pipes all ran into one tap, like. I've had a sixpence and a shilling for people to look at it: it cost me two pound ten.

"Even if I had a coffee-stall down at Covent-garden, I should do; and, besides, I understand the making of eel-soup. I have one child,—it is just three months and a week old. It is a boy, and we call it James Edward Albert. James is after my grandfather, who was a slave.

"I was a little boy when the slaves in Jamaica got their freedom: the people were very glad to be free; they do better since, I know, because some of them have got property, and send their children to school. There's more Christianity there than there is here. The public-house is close shut on Saturday night, and not opened till Monday morning. No fruit is allowed to be sold in the street. I am a Protestant. I don't know the name of the church, but I goes down to a new built church, near King's-cross. I never go in, because of my legs; but I just go inside the door; and sometimes when I don't go, I read the Testament I've got here: in all my sickness I took care of that.

"There are a great many Irish in this place. I would like to get away from it, for it is a very disgraceful place,—it is an awful, awful place altogether. I haven't been in it very long, and I want to get out of it; it is not fit.

"I pay one-and-sixpence rent. If you don't go out and drink and carouse with them, they don't like it; they make use of bad language—they chaff me about my misfortune—they call me 'Cripple;' some says 'Uncle Tom,' and some says 'Nigger;' but I never takes no notice of 'em at all."

The following is a verbatim copy of the placard which the poor fellow places before him when he begs. He carries it, when not in use, in a little calico bag which hangs round his neck:—

KIND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS

THE UNFORTUNATE

EDWARD ALBERT

WAS COOK ON BOARD THE BARQUE MADEIRA OF GLASGOW CAPTAIN J. DOUGLAS IN FEBRUARY 1851 WHEN AFTER ROUNDING CAPE HORNE HE HAD HIS LEGS AND FEET FROST BITTEN WHEN in that state the master and mate put my Legs and Feet into the Oven as they said to cure me the Oven being hot at the time a fowl was roasting was took away to make room for my feet and legs in consequence of this my feet and legs swelled and burst——Mortification then Ensued after which my legs were amputated Three Inches below the knees soon after my entering the Hospital at Valpariso.

AS I HAVE NO OTHER MEANS TO GET A LIVELYHOOD BUT BY APPEALING TO

A GENEROUS PUBLIC

YOUR KIND DONATIONS WILL BE MOST THANKFULLY RECEIVED.

THE MAIMED IRISH CROSSING-SWEEPER.

He stands at the corner of —— street, where the yellow omnibuses stop, and refers to himself every now and then as the "poor lame man." He has no especial mode of addressing the passers-by, except that of hobbling a step or two towards them and sweeping away an imaginary accumulation of mud. He has lost one leg (from the knee) by a fall from a scaffold, while working as a bricklayer's labourer in Wales, some six years ago; and speaks bitterly of the hard time he had of it when he first came to London, and hobbled about selling matches. He says he is thirty-six, but looks more than fifty; and his face has the ghastly expression of death. He wears the ordinary close cloth street-cap and corduroy trousers. Even during the warm weather he wears an upper coat—a rough thick garment, fit for the Arctic regions. It was very difficult to make him understand my object in getting information from him: he thought that he had nothing to tell, and laid great stress upon the fact of his never keeping "count" of anything.

He accounted for his miserably small income by stating that he was an invalid—"now and thin continually." He said—

"I can't say how long I have been on this crossin'; I think about five year. When I came on it there had been no one here before. No one interferes with me at all, at all. I niver hard of a crossin' bein' sould; but I don't know any other sweepers. I makes no fraydom with no one, and I always keeps my own mind.

"I dunno how much I earn a-day—p'rhaps I may git a shilling, and p'rhaps sixpence. I didn't git much yesterday (Sunday)—only sixpence. I was not out on Saturday; I was ill in bed, and I was at home on Friday. Indeed, I did not get much on Thursday, only tuppence ha'penny. The largest day? I dunno. Why, about a shilling. Well, sure, I might git as much as two shillings, if I got a shillin' from a lady. Some gintlemen are good—such a gintleman as you, now, might give me a shilling.

"Well, as to weather, I likes half dry and half wit; of course I wish for the bad wither. Every one must be glad of what brings good to him; and, there's one thing, I can't make the wither—I can't make a fine day nor a wit one. I don't think anybody would interfere with me; certainly, if I was a blaggya'rd I should not be left here; no, nor if I was a thief; but if any other man was to come on to my crossing, I can't say whether the police *would* interfere to protect me—p'rhaps they might.

"What is it I say to shabby people? Well, by J——, they're all shabby, I think. I don't see any difference; but what can I do? I can't insult thim, and I was niver insulted mysilf, since here I've been, nor, for the matter of that, ever had an angry worrud spoken to me.

"Well, sure, I dunno who's the most liberal; if I got a fourpinny bit from a moll I'd take it. Some of the ladies are very liberal; a good lady will give a sixpence. I never hard of sweepin' the mud back again; and as for the boys annoying me, I has no coleaguein' with boys, and they wouldn't be allowed to interfere with me—the police wouldn't allow it.

"After I came from Wales, where I was on one leg, selling matches, then it was I took to sweep the crossin'. A poor divil must put up with anything, good or bad. Well, I was a laborin' man, a bricklayer's labourer, and I've been away from Ireland these sixteen year. When I came from Ireland I went to Wales. I was there a long time; and the way I broke my leg was, I fell off a scaffold. I am not married; a lame man wouldn't get any woman to have him in London at all, at all. I don't know what age I am. I am not fifty, nor forty; I think about thirty-six. No, by J——, it's not mysilf that iver knew a well-off crossin'-sweeper. I don't dale in them at all.

"I got a dale of friends in London assist me (but only now and thin). If I depinded on the few ha'pence I get, I wouldn't live on 'em; what money I get here wouldn't buy a pound of mate; and I wouldn't live, only for my frinds. You see, sir, I can't be out always. I am laid up nows and thins continually. Oh, it's a poor trade to big on the crossin' from morning till night, and not get sixpence. I couldn't do with it, I know.

"Yes, sir, I smoke; it's a comfort, it is. I like any kind I'd get to smoke. I'd like the best if I got it.

"I am a Roman Catholic, and I go to St. Patrick's, in St. Giles's; a many people from my neighbourhood go there. I go every Sunday, and to Confession just once a-year—that saves me.

"By the Lord's mercy! I don't get broken victuals, nor broken mate, not as much as you might put on the tip of a forruk; they'd chuck it out in the dust-bin before they'd give it to me. I suppose they're all alike.

"The divil an odd job I iver got, master, nor knives to clane. If I got their knives to clane, p'rhaps I might clane them.

"My brooms cost threepence ha'penny; they are very good. I wear them down to a stump, and they last three weeks, this fine wither. I niver got any ould clothes—not but I want a coat very bad, sir.

"I come from Dublin; my father and mother died there of cholera; and when they died, I come to England, and that was the cause of my coming.

"By my oath it didn't stand me in more than eighteenpence that I took here last week.

"I live in —— lane, St. Giles's Church, on the second landing, and I pay eightpence a week. I haven't a room to mysilf, for there's a family lives in it wid me.

"When I goes home I just smokes a pipe, and goes to bid, that's all."

II.—JUVENILE CROSSING-SWEEPERS

A. The Boy Crossing-Sweepers.

Boy Crossing-Sweepers and Tumblers.

A remarkably intelligent lad, who, on being spoken to, at once consented to give all the information in his power, told me the following story of his life.

It will be seen from this boy's account, and the one or two following, that a kind of partnership exists among some of these young sweepers. They have associated themselves together, appropriated several crossings to their use, and appointed a captain over them. They have their forms of trial, and "jury-house" for the settlement of disputes; laws have been framed, which govern their commercial proceedings, and a kind of language adopted by the society for its better protection from its arch-enemy, the policeman.

I found the lad who first gave me an insight into the proceedings of the associated crossing-sweepers crouched on the stone steps of a door in Adelaide-street, Strand; and when I spoke to him he was preparing to settle down in a corner and go to sleep—his legs and body being curled round almost as closely as those of a cat on a hearth.

The moment he heard my voice he was upon his feet, asking me to "give a halfpenny to poor little Jack."

He was a good-looking lad, with a pair of large mild eyes, which he took good care to turn up with an expression of supplication as he moaned for his halfpenny.

A cap, or more properly a stuff bag, covered a crop of hair which had matted itself into the form of so many paint-brushes, while his face, from its roundness of feature and the complexion of dirt, had an almost Indian look about it; the colour of his hands, too, was such that you could imagine he had been shelling walnuts.

He ran before me, treading cautiously with his naked feet, until I reached a convenient spot to take down his statement, which was as follows:—

"I've got no mother or father; mother has been dead for two years, and father's been gone more than that—more nigh five years—he died at Ipswich, in Suffolk. He was a perfumer by trade, and used to make hair-dye, and scent, and pomatum, and all kinds of scents. He didn't keep a shop himself, but he used to serve them as did; he didn't hawk his goods about, neether, but had regular customers, what used to send him a letter, and then he'd take them what they wanted. Yes, he used to serve some good shops: there was H——'s, of London Bridge, what's a large chemist's. He used to make a good deal of money, but he lost it betting; and so his

brother, my uncle, did all his. He used to go up to High Park, and then go round by the Hospital, and then turn up a yard, where all the men are who play for money [Tattersall's]; and there he'd lose his money, or sometimes win,—but that wasn't often. I remember he used to come home tipsy, and say he'd lost on this or that horse, naming wot one he'd laid on; and then mother would coax him to bed, and afterwards sit down and begin to cry.

"I was not with father when he died (but I was when he was dying), for I was sent up along with eldest sister to London with a letter to uncle, who was head servant at a doctor's. In this letter, mother asked uncle to pay back some money wot he owed, and wot father lent him, and she asked him if he'd like to come down and see father before he died. I recollect I went back again to mother by the Orwell steamer. I was well dressed then, and had good clothes on, and I was given to the care of the captain—Mr. King his name was. But when I got back to Ipswich, father was dead.

"Mother took on dreadful; she was ill for three months afterwards, confined to her bed. She hardly eat anything: only beaf-tea—I think they call it—and eggs. All the while she kept on crying.

"Mother kept a servant; yes, sir, we always had a servant, as long as I can recollect; and she and the woman as was there—Anna they called her, an old lady—used to take care of me and sister. Sister was fourteen years old (she's married to a young man now, and they've gone to America; she went from a place in the East India Docks, and I saw her off). I used, when I was with mother, to go to school in the morning, and go at nine and come home at twelve to dinner, then go again at two and leave off at half-past four,—that is, if I behaved myself and did all my lessons right; for if I did not I was kept back till I *did* them so. Mother used to pay one shilling a-week, and extra for the copy-books and things. I can read and write—oh, yes, I mean read and write well—read anything, even old English; and I write pretty fair,—though I don't get much reading now, unless it's a penny paper—I've got one in my pocket now—it's the *London Journal*—there's a tale in it now about two brothers, and one of them steals the child away and puts another in his place, and then he gets found out, and all that, and he's just been falling off a bridge now.

"After mother got better, she sold all the furniture and goods and came up to London;—poor mother! She let a man of the name of Hayes have the greater part, and he left Ipswich soon after, and never gave mother the money. We came up to London, and mother took two rooms in Westminster, and I and sister lived along with her. She used to make hair-nets, and sister helped her, and used to take 'em to the hair-dressers to sell. She made these nets for two or three years, though she was suffering with a bad breast;—she died of that—poor thing!—for she had what doctors calls cancer—perhaps you've heard of 'em, sir,—and they had to cut all round here (making motions with his hands from the shoulder to the bosom). Sister saw it, though I didn't.

"Ah! she was a very good, kind mother, and very fond of both of us; though father wasn't, for he'd always have a noise with mother when he come home, only he was seldom with us when he was making his goods.

"After mother died, sister still kept on making nets, and I lived with her for some time, until she told me she couldn't afford to keep me no longer, though she seemed to have a pretty good lot to do; but she would never let me go with her to the shops, though I could crochet, which she'd learned me, and used to run and get her all her silks and things what she wanted. But she was keeping company with a young man, and one day they went out, and came back and said they'd been and got married. It was him as got rid of me.

"He was kind to me for the first two or three months, while he was keeping her company; but before he was married he got a little cross, and after he was married he begun to get more cross, and used to send me to play in the streets, and tell me not to come home again till night. One day he hit me, and I said I wouldn't be hit about by him, and then at tea that night sister gave me three shillings, and told me I must go and get my own living. So I bought a box and brushes (they cost me just the money) and went cleaning boots, and I done pretty well with them, till my box was stole from me by a boy where I was lodging. He's in prison now—got six calendar for picking pockets.

"Sister kept all my clothes. When I asked her for 'em, she said they was disposed of along with all mother's goods; but she gave me some shirts and stockings, and such-like, and I had very good clothes, only they was all worn out. I saw sister after I left her, many times. I asked her many times to take me back, but she used to say, 'It was not her likes, but her husband's, or she'd have had me back;' and I think it was true, for until he came she was a kind-hearted girl; but he said he'd enough to do to look after his own living; he was a fancy-baker by trade.

"I was fifteen the 24th of last May, sir, and I've been sweeping crossings now near upon two years. There's a party of six of us, and we have the crossings from St. Martin's Church as far as Pall Mall. I always go along with them as lodges in the same place as I do. In the daytime, if it's dry, we do anythink what we can—open cabs, or anythink; but if it's wet, we separate, and I and another gets a crossing—those who gets on it first, keeps it,—and we stand on each side and take our chance.

"We do it in this way:—if I was to see two gentlemen coming, I should cry out, 'Two toffs!' and then they are mine; and whether they give me anythink or not they are mine, and my mate is bound not to follow them; for if he did he would get a hiding from the whole lot of us. If we both cry out together, then we share. If it's a lady and gentleman, then we cries, 'A toff and a doll!' Sometimes we are caught out in this way. Perhaps it is a lady and gentleman and a child; and if I was to see them, and only say, 'A toff and a doll,' and leave out the child, then my mate can add the child; and as he is right and I wrong, then it's his party.

"If there's a policeman close at hand we mustn't ask for money; but we are always on the look-out for the policemen, and if we see one, then we calls out 'Phillup!' for that's our signal. One of the policemen at St. Martin's Church—Bandy, we calls him—knows what Phillup means, for he's up to us; so we had to change the word. (At the request of the young crossing-sweeper the present signal is omitted.)

"Yesterday on the crossing I got threepence halfpenny, but when it's dry like to-day I do nothink, for I haven't got a penny yet. We never carries no pockets, for if the policemen find us we generally pass the money to our mates, for if money's found on us we have fourteen days in prison.

"If I was to reckon all the year round, that is, one day with another, I think we make fourpence every day, and if we were to stick to it we should make more, for on a very muddy day we do better. One day, the best I ever had, from nine o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock at night, I made seven shillings and sixpence, and got not one bit of silver money among it. Every shilling I got I went and left at a shop near where my crossing is, for fear I might get into any harm. The shop's kept by a woman we deals with for what we wants—tea and butter, or sugar, or brooms—anythink we wants. Saturday night week I made two-and-sixpence; that's what I took altogether up to six o'clock.

"When we see the rain we say together, 'Oh! there's a jolly good rain! we'll have a good day to-morrow.' If a shower comes on, and we are at our room, which we general are about three o'clock, to get somethink to eat—besides, we general go there to see how much each other's taken in the day—why, out we run with our brooms.

"We're always sure to make money if there's mud—that's to say, if we look for our money, and ask; of course, if we stand still we don't. Now, there's Lord Fitzhardinge, he's a good gentleman, what lives in Spring-gardens, in a large house. He's got a lot of servants and carriages. Every time he crosses the Charing-cross crossing he always gives the girl half a sovereign." (This statement was taken in June 1856.) "He doesn't cross often, because, hang it, he's got such a lot of carriages, but when he's on foot he always does. If they asks him he doesn't give nothink, but if they touches their caps he does. The housekeeper at his house is very kind to us. We run errands for her, and when she wants any of her own letters taken to the post then she calls, and if we are on the crossing we takes them for her. She's a very nice lady, and gives us broken victuals. I've got a share in that crossing,—there are three of us, and when he gives the half sovereign he always gives it to the girl, and those that are in it shares it. She would do us out of it if she could, but we all takes good care of that, for we are all cheats.

"At night-time we tumbles—that is, if the policemen ain't nigh. We goes general to Waterloo-place when the Opera's on. We sends on one of us ahead, as a looker-out, to look for the policeman, and then we follows. It's no good tumbling to gentlemen *going* to the Opera; it's when they're coming back they gives us money. When they've got a young lady on their arm they laugh at us tumbling; some will give us a penny, others threepence, sometimes a sixpence or a shilling, and sometimes a halfpenny. We either do the cat'un-wheel, or else we keep before the gentleman and lady, turning head-over-heels, putting our broom on the ground and then turning over it.

"I work a good deal fetching cabs after the Opera is over; we general open the doors of those what draw up at the side of the pavement for people to get into as have walked a little down the Haymarket looking for a cab. We gets a month in prison if we touch the others by the columns. I once had half a sovereign give me by a gentleman; it was raining awful, and I run all about for a cab, and at last I got one. The gentleman knew it was half a sovereign, because he said—'Here, my little man, here's half a sovereign for your trouble.' He had three ladies with him, beautiful ones, with nothink on their heads, and only capes on their bare shoulders; and he had white kids on, and his regular Opera togs, too. I liked him very much, and as he was going to give me somethink the ladies says—'Oh, give him somethink extra!' It was pouring with rain, and they couldn't get a cab; they were all engaged, but I jumped on the box of one as was driving along the line. Last Saturday Opera night I made fifteen pence by the gentlemen coming from the Opera.

"After the Opera we go into the Haymarket, where all the women are who walk the streets all night. They don't give us no money, but they tell the gentlemen to. Sometimes, when they are talking to the gentlemen, they say, 'Go away, you young rascal!' and if they are saucy, then we say to them, 'We're not talking to you, my doxy, we're talking to the gentleman,'—but that's only if they're rude, for if they speak civil we always goes. They knows what 'doxy' means. What is it? Why that

they are no better than us! If we are on the crossing, and we says to them as they go by, 'Good luck to you!' they always give us somethink either that night or the next. There are two with bloomer bonnets, who always give us somethink if we says 'Good luck.' Sometimes a gentleman will tell us to go and get them a young lady, and then we goes, and they general gives us sixpence for that. If the gents is dressed finely we gets them a handsome girl; if they're dressed middling, then we gets them a middling-dressed one; but we usual prefers giving a turn to girls that have been kind to us, and they are sure to give us somethink the next night. If we don't find any girls walking, we knows where to get them in the houses in the streets round about.

"We always meet at St. Martin's steps—the 'jury house,' we calls 'em—at three o'clock in the morning, that's always our hour. We reckons up what we've taken, but we don't divide. Sometimes, if we owe anythink where we lodge, the women of the house will be waiting on the steps for us: then, if we've got it, we pay them; if we haven't, why it can't be helped, and it goes on. We gets into debt, because sometimes the women where we live gets lushy; then we don't give them anythink, because they'd forget it, so we spends it ourselves. We can't lodge at what's called model lodging-houses, as our hours don't suit them folks. We pays threepence a-night for lodging. Food, if we get plenty of money, we buys for ourselves. We buys a pound of bread, that's twopence farthing—best seconds, and a farthing's worth of dripping—that's enough for a pound of bread—and we gets a ha'porth of tea and a ha'porth of sugar; or if we're hard up, we gets only a penn'orth of bread. We make our own tea at home; they lends us a kittle, teapot, and cups and saucers, and all that.

"Once or twice a-week we gets meat. We all club together, and go into Newgate Market and gets some pieces cheap, and biles them at home. We tosses up who shall have the biggest bit, and we divide the broth, a cupful in each basin, until it's lasted out. If any of us has been unlucky we each gives the unlucky one one or two halfpence. Some of us is obliged at times to sleep out all night; and sometimes, if any of us gets nothink, then the others gives him a penny or two, and *he* does the same for us when *we* are out of luck.

"Besides, there's our clothes: I'm paying for a pair of boots now. I paid a shilling off Saturday night.

"When we gets home at half-past three in the morning, whoever cries out 'first wash' has it. First of all we washes our feet, and we all uses the same water. Then we washes our faces and hands, and necks, and whoever fetches the fresh water up has first wash; and if the second don't like to go and get fresh, why he uses the dirty. Whenever we come in the landlady makes us wash our feet. Very often the stones cuts our feet and makes them bleed; then we bind a bit of rag round them. We like to put on boots and shoes in the day-time, but at night-time we can't, because it stops the tumbling.

"On the Sunday we all have a clean shirt put on before we go out, and then we go and tumble after the omnibuses. Sometimes we do very well on a fine Sunday, when there's plenty of people out on the roofs of the busses. We never do anythink on a wet day, but only when it's been raining and then dried up. I have run after a Cremorne bus, when they've thrown us money, as far as from Charing-cross right up to Piccadilly, but if they don't throw us nothink we don't run very far. I should think we gets at that work, taking one Sunday with another, eightpence all the year round.

"When there's snow on the ground we puts our money together, and goes and buys an old shovel, and then, about seven o'clock in the morning, we goes to the shops and asks them if we shall scrape the snow away. We general gets twopence every house, but some gives sixpence, for it's very hard to clean the snow away, particular when it's been on the ground some time. It's awful cold, and gives us chilblains on our feet; but we don't mind it when we're working, for we soon gets hot then.

"Before winter comes, we general save up our money and buys a pair of shoes. Sometimes we makes a very big snowball and rolls it up to the hotels, and then the gentlemen laughs and throws us money; or else we pelt each other with snowballs, and then they scrambles money between us. We always go to Morley's Hotel, at Charing-cross. The police in winter times is kinder to us than in summer, and they only laughs at us;—p'rhaps it is because there is not so many of us about then,—only them as is obligated to find a living for themselves; for many of the boys has fathers and mothers as sends them out in summer, but keeps them at home in winter when it's piercing cold.

"I have been to the station-house, because the police always takes us up if we are out at night; but we're only locked up till morning,—that is, if we behaves ourselves when we're taken before the gentleman. Mr. Hall, at Bow-street, only says, 'Poor boy, let him go.' But it's only when we've done nothink but stop out that he says that. He's a kind old gentleman; but mind, it's only when you have been before him two or three times he says so, because if it's a many times, he'll send you for fourteen days.

"But we don't mind the police much at night-time, because we jumps over the walls round the place at Trafalgar-square, and they don't like to follow us at that game, and only stands looking at you over the parrypit. There was one tried to jump the wall, but he split his trousers all to bits, and now they're afraid. That was Old Bandy as bust his breeches; and we all hate him, as well as another we calls Black Diamond, what's general along with the Red Liners, as we calls the Mendicity officers, who goes about in disguise as gentlemen, to take up poor boys caught begging.

"When we are talking together we always talk in a kind of slang. Each policeman we gives a regular name—there's 'Bull's Head,' 'Bandy Shanks,' and 'Old Cherry Legs,' and 'Dot-and-carry-one;' they all knows their names as well as us. We never talks of crossings, but 'fakes.' We don't make no slang of our own, but uses the regular one.

"A broom doesn't last us more than a week in wet weather, and they costs us twopence halfpenny each; but in dry weather they are good for a fortnight."

Young Mike's Statement.

The next lad I examined was called Mike. He was a short, stout-set youth, with a face like an old man's, for the features were hard and defined, and the hollows had got filled up with dirt till his countenance was brown as an old wood carving. I have seldom seen so dirty a face, for the boy had been in a perspiration, and then wiped his cheeks with his muddy hands, until they were marbled, like the covering to a copy-book.

The old lady of the house in which the boy lived seemed to be hurt by the unwashed appearance of her lodger. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself—and that's God's truth—not to go and sluice yourself afore spaking to the jintlemin," she cried, looking alternately at me and the lad, as if asking me to witness her indignation.

Mike wore no shoes, but his feet were as black as if cased in gloves with short fingers. His coat had been a man's, and the tails reached to his ankles; one of the sleeves was wanting, and a dirty rag had been wound round the arm in its stead. His hair spread about like a tuft of grass where a rabbit has been squatting.

He said, "I haven't got neither no father nor no mother,—never had, sir; for father's been dead these two year, and mother getting on for eight. They was both Irish people, please sir, and father was a bricklayer. When father was at work in the country, mother used to get work carrying loads at Covent-garden Market. I lived with father till he died, and that was from a complaint in his chest. After that I lived along with my big brother, what's 'listed in the Marines now. He used to sweep a crossing in Camden-town, opposite the Southampting Harms, near the toll-gate.

"He did pretty well up there sometimes, such as on Christmas-day, where he has took as much as six shillings sometimes, and never less than one and sixpence. All the gentlements knowed him thereabouts, and one or two used to give him a shilling a-week regular.

"It was he as first of all put me up to sweep a crossing, and I used to take my stand at St. Martin's Church.

"I didn't see anybody working there, so I planted myself on it. After a time some other boys come up. They come up and wanted to turn me off, and began hitting me with their brooms,—they hit me regular hard with the old stumps; there was five or six of them; so I couldn't defend myself, but told the policeman, and he turned them all away except me, because he saw me on first, sir. Now we are all friends, and work together, and all that we earns ourself we has.

"On a good day, when it's poured o' rain and then leave off sudden, and made it nice and muddy, I've took as much as ninepence; but it's too dry now, and we don't do more than fourpence.

"At night, I go along with the others tumbling. I does the cat'en-wheel [probably a contraction of Catherine-wheel]; I throws myself over sideways on my hands with my legs in the air. I can't do it more than four times running, because it makes the blood to the head, and then all the things seems to turn round. Sometimes a chap will give me a lick with a stick just as I'm going over—sometimes a reg'lar good hard whack; but it ain't often, and we general gets a halfpenny or a penny by it.

"The boys as runs after the busses was the first to do these here cat'en-wheels. I know the boy as was the very first to do it. His name is Gander, so we calls him the Goose.

"There's about nine or ten of us in our gang, and as is reg'lar; we lodges at different places, and we has our reg'lar hours for meeting, but we all comes and goes when we likes, only we keeps together, so as not to let any others come on the crossings but ourselves.

"If another boy tries to come on we cries out, 'Here's a Rooshian,' and then if he won't go away, we all sets on him and gives him a drubbing; and if he still comes down the next day, we pays him out twice as much, and harder.

"There's never been one down there yet as can lick us all together.

"If we sees one of our pals being pitched into by other boys, we goes up and helps him. Gander's the leader of our gang, 'cause he can tumble back'ards (no, that ain't the cat'en-wheel, that's tumbling); so he gets more tin give him, and that's why we makes him cap'an.

"After twelve at night we goes to the Regent's Circus, and we tumbles there to the gentlemen and ladies. The most I ever got was sixpence at a time. The French ladies never give us nothink, but they all says, 'Chit, chit, chit,' like hissing at us, for they can't understand us, and we're as bad off with them.

"If it's a wet night we leaves off work about twelve o'clock, and don't bother with the Haymarket.

"The first as gets to the crossing does the

sweeping away of the mud. Then they has in return all the halfpence they can take. When it's been wet every day, a broom gets down to stump in about four days. We either burns the old brooms, or, if we can, we sells 'em for a ha'penny to some other boy, if he's flat enough to buy 'em."

Gander—The "Captain" of the Boy Crossing-Sweepers.

Gander, the captain of the gang of boy crossing-sweepers, was a big lad of sixteen, with a face devoid of all expression, until he laughed, when the cheeks, mouth, and forehead instantly became crumpled up with a wonderful quantity of lines and dimples. His hair was cut short, and stood up in all directions, like the bristles of a hearth-broom, and was a light dust tint, matching with the hue of his complexion, which also, from an absence of washing, had turned to a decided drab, or what house-painters term a stone-colour.

He spoke with a lisp, occasioned by the loss of two of his large front teeth, which allowed the tongue as he talked to appear through the opening in a round nob like a raspberry.

The boy's clothing was in a shocking condition. He had no coat, and his blue-striped shirt was as dirty as a French-polisher's rags, and so tattered, that the shoulder was completely bare, while the sleeve hung down over the hand like a big bag.

From the fish-scales on the sleeves of his coat, it had evidently once belonged to some coster in the herring line. The nap was all worn off, so that the lines of the web were showing like a coarse carpet; and instead of buttons, string had been passed through holes pierced at the side.

Of course he had no shoes on, and his black trousers, which, with the grease on them, were gradually assuming a tarpaulin look, were fastened over one shoulder by means of a brace and bits of string.

During his statement, he illustrated his account of the tumbling backwards—the "catenwheeling"— with different specimens of the art, throwing himself about on the floor with an ease and almost grace, and taking up so small a space of the ground for the performance, that his limbs seemed to bend as though his bones were flexible like cane.

"To tell you the blessed truth, I can't say the last shilling I handled."

"Don't you go a-believing on him," whispered another lad in my ear, whilst Gander's head was turned: "he took thirteenpence last night, he did."

It was perfectly impossible to obtain from this lad any account of his average earnings. The other boys in the gang told me that he made more than any of them. But Gander, who is a thorough street-beggar, and speaks with a peculiar whine, and who, directly you look at him, puts on an expression of deep distress, seemed to have made up his mind, that if he made himself out to be in great want I should most likely relieve him—so he would not budge an inch from his twopence a-day, declaring it to be the maximum of his daily earnings.

"Ah," he continued, with a persecuted tone of voice, "if I had only got a little money, I'd be a bright youth! The first chance as I get of earning a few halfpence, I'll buy myself a coat, and be off to the country, and I'll lay something I'd soon be a gentleman then, and come home with a couple of pounds in my pocket, instead of never having ne'er a farthing, as now."

One of the other lads here exclaimed, "Don't go on like that there, Goose; you're making us out all liars to the gentleman."

The old woman also interfered. She lost all patience with Gander, and reproached him for making a false return of his income. She tried to shame him into truthfulness, by saying,—

"Look at my Johnny—my grandson, sir, he's not a quarther the Goose's size, and yet he'll bring me home his shilling, or perhaps eighteenpence or two shillings—for shame on you, Gander! Now, did you make six shillings last week?—now, speak God's truth!"

"What! six shillings?" cried the Goose—"six shillings!" and he began to look up at the ceiling, and shake his hands. "Why, I never heard of sich a sum. I did once *see* a half-crown; but I don't know as I ever touched e'er a one."

"Thin," added the old woman, indignantly, "it's because you're idle, Gander, and you don't study when you're on the crossing; but lets the gintlefolk go by without ever a word. That's what it is, sir."

The Goose seemed to feel the truth of this reproach, for he said with a sigh, "I knows I am fickle-minded."

He then continued his statement,—

"I can't tell how many brooms I use; for as fast as I gets one, it is took from me. God help me! They watch me put it away, and then up they comes and takes it. What kinds of brooms is the best? Why, as far as I am concerned, I would sooner have a stump on a dry day—it's lighter and handier to carry; but on a wet day, give me a new un.

"I'm sixteen, your honour, and my name's George Gandea, and the boys calls me 'the Goose' in consequence; for it's a nickname they gives me, though my name ain't spelt with a *har* at the end, but with a *h'ay*, so that I ain't Gand*er* after all, but Gand*ea*, which is a sell for 'em.

"God knows what I am—whether I'm h'Irish or h'*I*talian, or what; but I was christened here in London, and that's all about it.

"Father was a bookbinder. I'm sixteen now, and father turned me away when I was nine year old, for mother had been dead before that. I was told my right name by my brother-in-law, who had my register. He's a sweep, sir, by trade, and I wanted to know about my real name when I was going down to the *Waterloo*—that's a ship as I wanted to get aboard as a cabin-boy.

"I remember the fust night I slept out after father got rid of me. I slept on a gentleman's door-step, in the winter, on the 15th January. I packed my shirt and coat, which was a pretty good one, right over my ears, and then scruntched myself into a doorway, and the policeman passed by four or five times without seeing on me.

"I had a mother-in-law at the time; but father used to drink, or else I should never have been as I am; and he came home one night, and says he, 'Go out and get me a few ha'pence for breakfast,' and I said I had never been in the streets in my life, and couldn't: and, says he, 'Go out, and never let me see you no more,' and I took him to his word, and have never been near him since.

"Father lived in Barbican at that time, and after leaving him, I used to go to the Royal Exchange, and there I met a boy of the name of Michael, and he first learnt me to beg, and made me run after people, saying, 'Poor boy, sir—please give us a ha'penny to get a mossel of bread.' But as fast as I got anythink, he used to take it away, and knock me about shameful; so I left him, and then I picked up with a chap as taught me tumbling. I soon larnt how to do it, and then I used to go tumbling after busses. That was my notion all along, and I hadn't picked up the way of doing it half an hour before I was after that game.

"I took to crossings about eight year ago, and the very fust person as I asked, I had a fourpenny-piece give to me. I said to him, 'Poor little Jack, yer honour,' and, fust of all, says he, 'I haven't got no coppers,' and then he turns back and give me a fourpenny-bit. I thought I was made for life when I got that.

"I wasn't working in a gang then, but all by myself, and I used to do well, making about a shilling or ninepence a-day. I lodged in Church-lane at that time.

"It was at the time of the Shibition year (1851) as these gangs come up. There was lots of boys that came out sweeping, and that's how they picked up the tumbling off me, seeing me do it up in the Park, going along to the Shibition.

"The crossing at St. Martin's Church was mine fust of all; and when the other lads come to it I didn't take no heed of 'em—only for that I'd have been a bright boy by now, but they carnied me over like; for when I tried to turn 'em off they'd say, in a carnying way, 'Oh, let us stay on,' so I never took no heed of 'em.

"There was about thirteen of 'em in my gang at that time.

"They made me cap'an over the lot—I suppose because they thought I was the best tumbler of 'em. They obeyed me a little. If I told 'em not to go to any gentleman, they wouldn't, and leave him to me. There was only one feller as used to give me a share of his money, and that was for larning him to tumble—he'd give a penny or twopence, just as he yearnt a little or a lot. I taught 'em all to tumble, and we used to do it near the crossing, and at night along the streets.

"We used to be sometimes together of a day, some a-running after one gentleman, and some after another; but we seldom kept together more than three or four at a time.

"I was the fust to introduce tumbling backards, and I'm proud of it—yes, sir, I'm proud of it. There's another little chap as I'm larning to do it; but he ain't got strength enough in his arms like. ('Ah!' exclaimed a lad in the room, 'he *is* a one to tumble, is Johnny—go along the streets like anythink.')

"He is the King of the Tumblers," continued Gander—"King, and I'm Cap'an."

The old grandmother here joined in. "He was taught by a furreign gintleman, sir, whose wife rode at a circus. He used to come here twice a-day and give him lessons in this here very room, sir. That's how he got it, sir."

"Ah," added another lad, in an admiring tone, "see him and the Goose have a race! Away they goes, but Jacky will leave him a mile behind."

The history then continued:—"People liked the tumbling backards and forards, and it got a good bit of money at fust, but they is getting tired with it, and I'm growing too hold, I fancy. It hurt me awful at fust. I tried it fust under a railway arch of the Blackwall Railway; and when I goes backards, I thought it'd cut my head open. It hurts me if I've got a thin cap on.

"The man as taught me tumbling has gone on the stage. Fust he went about with swords, fencing, in public-houses, and then he got engaged. Me and him once tumbled all round the circus at the Rotunda one night wot was a benefit, and got one-and-eightpence a-piece, and all for only five hours and a half—from six to half-past eleven, and we acting and tumbling, and all that. We had plenty of beer, too. We was wery much applauded when we did it.

"I was the fust boy as ever did ornamental work in the mud of my crossings. I used to be at the crossing at the corner of Regent-suckus; and that's the wery place where I fust did it. The wery fust thing as I did was a hanker (anchor)—a regular one, with turn-up sides and a rope down the centre, and all. I sweeped it away clean in the mud in the shape of the drawing I'd seen. It paid well, for I took one-and-ninepence on it. The next thing I tried was writing 'God save the Queen;' and that, too, paid capital, for I think I got two bob. After that I tried We Har (V. R.) and a star, and that was a sweep too. I never did no flowers, but I've done imitations of

laurels, and put them all round the crossing, and very pretty it looked, too, at night. I'd buy a farthing candle and stick it over it, and make it nice and comfortable, so that the people could look at it easy. Whenever I see a carriage coming I used to douse the glim and run away with it, but the wheels would regularly spile the drawings, and then we'd have all the trouble to put it to rights again, and that we used to do with our hands.

"I fust learnt drawing in the mud from a man in Adelaide-street, Strand; he kept a crossing, but he only used to draw 'em close to the kerb-stone. He used to keep some soft mud there, and when a carriage come up to the Lowther Arcade, after he'd opened the door and let the lady out, he would set to work, and by the time she come back he'd have some flowers, or a We Har, or whatever he liked, done in the mud, and underneath he'd write, 'Please to remember honnest hindustry.'

"I used to stand by and see him do it, until I'd learnt, and when I knowed, I went off and did it at my crossing.

"I was the fust to light up at night though, and now I wish I'd never done it, for it was that which got me turned off my crossing, and a capital one it was. I thought the gentlemen coming from the play would like it, for it looked very pretty. The policeman said I was destructing (obstructing) the thoroughfare, and making too much row there, for the people used to stop in the crossing to look, it were so pretty. He took me in charge three times on one night, cause I wouldn't go away; but he let me go again, till at last I thought he would lock me up for the night, so I hooked it.

"It was after this as I went to St. Martin's Church, and I haven't done half as well there. Last night I took three-ha'pence; but I was larking, or I might have had more."

As a proof of the very small expense which is required for the toilette of a crossing-sweeper, I may mention, that within a few minutes after Master Gander had finished his statement, he was in possession of a coat, for which he had paid the sum of fivepence.

When he brought it into the room, all the boys and the women crowded round to see the purchase.

"It's a very good un," said the Goose. "It only wants just taking up here and there; and this cuff putting to rights." And as he spoke he pointed to tears large enough for a head to be thrust through.

"I've seen that coat before, sum'ares," said one of the women; "where did you get it?"

"At the chandly-shop," answered the Goose.

THE "KING" OF THE TUMBLING-BOY CROSSING-SWEEPERS.

THE young sweeper who had been styled by his companions the "King" was a pretty-looking boy, only tall enough to rest his chin comfortably on the mantel-piece as he talked to me, and with a pair of grey eyes that were as bright and clear as drops of sea-water. He was clad in a style in no way agreeing with his royal title; for he had on a kind of dirt-coloured shooting-coat of tweed, which was fraying into a kind of cobweb at the edges and elbows. His trousers too, were rather faulty, for there was a pink-wrinkled dot of flesh at one of the knees; while their length was too great for his majesty's short legs, so that they had to be rolled up at the end like a washer-woman's sleeves.

His royal highness was of a restless disposition, and, whilst talking, lifted up, one after another, the different ornaments on the mantel-piece, frowning and looking at them sideways, as he pondered over the replies he should make to my questions.

When I arrived at the grandmother's apartment the "king" was absent, his majesty having been sent with a pitcher to fetch some spring-water.

The "king" also was kind enough to favour me with samples of his wondrous tumbling powers. He could bend his little legs round till they curved like the long German sausages we see in the ham-and-beef shops; and when he turned head over heels, he curled up his tiny body as closely as a wood-louse, and then rolled along, wabbling like an egg.

"The boys call me Johnny," he said; "and I'm getting on for eleven, and I goes along with the Goose and Harry, a-sweeping at St. Martin's Church, and about there. I used, too, to go to the crossing where the statute is, sir, at the bottom of the Haymarket. I went along with the others; sometimes there were three or four of us, or sometimes one, sir. I never used to sweep unless it was wet. I don't go out not before twelve or one in the day; it ain't no use going before that; and beside, I couldn't get up before that, I'm too sleepy. I don't stop out so late as the other boys; they sometimes stop all night, but I don't like that. The Goose was out all night along with Martin; they went all along up Piccirilly, and there they climbed over the Park railings and went a birding all by themselves, and then they went to sleep for an hour on the grass—so they says. I likes better to come home to my bed. It kills me for the next day when I do stop out all night. The Goose is always out all night; he likes it.

"Neither father nor mother's alive, sir, but I lives along with grandmother and aunt, as owns this room, and I always gives them all I gets.

"Sometimes I makes a shilling, sometimes sixpence, and sometimes less. I can never take nothink of a day, only of a night, because I can't tumble of a day, and I can of a night.

"The Gander taught me tumbling, and he was the first as did it along the crossings. I can tumble quite as well as the Goose; I can turn a caten-wheel, and he can't, and I can go further on forards than him, but I can't tumble backards as he can. I can't do a handspring, though. Why, a handspring's pitching yourself forards on both hands, turning over in front, and lighting on your feet; that's very difficult, and very few can do it. There's one little chap, but he's very clever, and can tie himself up in a knot a'most. I'm best at caten-wheels; I can do 'em twelve or fourteen times running—keep on at it. It just *does* tire you, that's all. When I gets up I feels quite giddy. I can tumble about forty times over head and heels. I does the most of that, and I thinks it's the most difficult, but I can't say which gentlemen likes best. You see they are anigh sick of the head-and-heels tumbling, and then werry few of the boys can do caten-wheels on the crossings—only two or three besides me.

"When I see anybody coming, I says, 'Please, sir, give me a halfpenny,' and touches my hair, and then I throws a caten-wheel, and has a look at 'em, and if I sees they are laughing, then I goes on and throws more of 'em. Perhaps one in ten will give a chap something. Some of 'em will give you a threepenny-bit or p'rhaps sixpence, and others only give you a kick. Well, sir, I should say they likes tumbling over head and heels; if you can keep it up twenty times then they begins laughing, but if you only does it once, some of 'em will say, 'Oh, I could do that myself,' and then they don't give nothink.

"I know they calls me the King of Tumblers, and I think I can tumble the best of them; none of them is so good as me, only the Goose at tumbling backards.

"We don't crab one another when we are sweeping; if we was to crab one another, we'd get to fighting and giving slaps of the jaw to one another. So when we sees anybody coming, we cries, 'My gentleman and lady coming here;' 'My lady;' 'My two gentlemens;' and if any other chap gets the money, then we says, 'I named them, now I'll have halves.' And if he won't give it, then we'll smug his broom or his cap. I'm the littlest chap among our lot, but if a fellow like the Goose was to take my naming then I'd smug somethink. I shouldn't mind his licking me, I'd smug his money and get his halfpence or somethink. If a chap as can't tumble sees a sporting gent coming and names him, he says to one of us tumblers, 'Now, then, who'll give us halves?' and then we goes and tumbles and shares. The sporting gentlemens likes tumbling; they kicks up more row laughing than a dozen others.

"Sometimes at night we goes down to Covent Garden, to where Hevans's is, but not till all the plays is over, cause Hevans's don't shut afore two or three. When the people comes out we gets tumbling afore them. Some of the drunken gentlemens is shocking spiteful, and runs after a chap and gives us a cut with the cane; some of the others will give us money, and some will buy our broom off us for sixpence. Me and Jemmy sold the two of our brooms for a shilling to two drunken gentlemens, and they began kicking up a row, and going before other gentlemens and pretending to sweep, and taking off their hats begging, like a mocking of us. They danced about with the brooms, flourishing 'em in the air, and knocking off people's hats; and at last they got into a cab, and chucked the brooms away. The drunken gentlemens is always either jolly or spiteful.

"But I goes only to the Haymarket, and about Pall Mall, now. I used to be going up to Hevans's every night, but I can't take my money up there now. I stands at the top of the Haymarket by Windmill-street, and when I sees a lady and gentleman coming out of the Argyle, then I begs of them as they comes across. I says—'Can't you give me a ha'penny, sir, poor little Jack? I'll stand on my nose for a penny;'—and then they laughs at that.

"Goose can stand on his nose as well as me; we puts the face flat down on the ground, instead of standing on our heads. There's Duckey Dunnovan, and the Stuttering Baboon, too, and two others as well, as can do it; but the Stuttering Baboon's getting too big and fat to do it well; he's a very awkward tumbler. It don't hurt, only at larning; cos you bears more on your hands than your nose.

"Sometimes they says—'Well, let us see you do it,' and then p'raps they'll search in their pockets, and say—'O, I haven't got any coppers:' so then we'll force 'em, and p'raps they'll pull out their purse and gives us a little bit of silver.

"Ah, we works hard for what we gets, and then there's the policemen birching us. Some of 'em is so spiteful, they takes up their belt what they uses round the waist to keep their coat tight, and 'll hit us with the buckle; but we generally gives 'em the lucky dodge and gets out of their way.

"One night, two gentlemen, officers they was, was standing in the Haymarket, and a drunken man passed by. There was snow on the ground, and we'd been begging of 'em, and says one of them—'I'll give you a shilling if you'll knock that drunken man over.' We was three of us; so we set on him, and soon had him down. After he got up he went and told the policemen, but we all cut round different ways and got off, and then met again. We didn't get the shilling, though, cos a boy crabbed us. He went up to the gentleman, and says he—'Give it me, sir, I'm the boy;' and then we says—'No, sir, it's us.' So, says the officer—'I sharn't give it to none of you,' and puts it back again in his pockets. We broke a broom over the boy as crabbed us, and then we cut down Waterloo-place, and afterwards we come up to the Haymarket again, and there we met the officers again. I did a caten-wheel, and then says I—'Then won't you give me un now?' and they says—'Go and sweep some mud on that woman.' So I went and did it, and then they takes me in a

pastry-shop at the corner, and they tells me to tumble on the tables in the shop. I nearly broke one of 'em, they were so delicate. They gived me a fourpenny meat-pie and two penny sponge-cakes, which I puts in my pocket, cos there was another sharing with me. The lady of the shop kept on screaming—'Go and fetch me a police—take the dirty boy out,' cos I was standing on the tables in my muddy feet, and the officers was a bursting their sides with laughing; and says they, 'No, he sharn't stir.'

"I was frightened, cos if the police had come they'd been safe and sure to have took me. They made me tumble from the door to the end of the shop, and back again, and then I turned 'em a caten-wheel, and was near knocking down all the things as was on the counter.

"They didn't give me no money, only pies; but I got a shilling another time for tumbling to some French ladies and gentlemen in a pastry-cook's shop under the Colonnade. I often goes into a shop like that; I've done it a good many times.

"There was a gentleman once as belonged to a 'suckus,' (circus) as wanted to take me with him abroad, and teach me tumbling. He had a little mustache, and used to belong to Drury-lane play-house, riding on horses. I went to his place, and stopped there some time. He taught me to put my leg round my neck, and I was just getting along nicely with the splits (going down on the ground with both legs extended), when I left him. They (the splits) used to hurt worst of all; very bad for the thighs. I used, too, to hang with my leg round his neck. When I did anythink he liked, he used to be clapping me on the back. He wasn't so very stunning well off, for he never had what I calls a good dinner—grandmother used to have a better dinner than he,—perhaps only a bit of scrag of mutton between three of us. I don't like meat nor butter, but I likes dripping, and they never had none there. The wife used to drink—ay, very much, on the sly. She used when he was out to send me round with a bottle and sixpence to get a quartern of gin for her, and she'd take it with three or four oysters. Grandmother didn't like the notion of my going away, so she went down one day, and says she—'I wants my child;' and the wife says—'That's according to the master's likings;' and then grandmother says—'What, not my own child?' And then grandmother began talking, and at last, when the master come home, he says to me—'Which will you do, stop here, or go home with your grandmother?' So I come along with her.

"I've been sweeping the crossings getting on for two years. Before that I used to go caten-wheeling after the busses. I don't like the sweeping, and I don't think there's e'er a one of us wot likes it. In the winter we has to be out in the cold, and then in summer we have to sleep out all night, or go asleep on the church-steps, reg'lar tired out.

"One of us 'll say at night—'Oh, I'm sleepy now, who's game for a doss? I'm for a doss;'—and then we go eight or ten of us into a doorway of the church, where they keep the dead in a kind of airy-like underneath, and there we go to sleep. The most of the boys has got no homes. Perhaps they've got the price of a lodging, but they're hungry, and they eats the money, and then they must lay out. There's some of 'em will stop out in the wet for perhaps the sake of a halfpenny, and get themselves sopping wet. I think all our chaps would like to get out of the work if they could; I'm sure Goose would, and so would I.

"All the boys call me the King, because I tumbles so well, and some calls me 'Pluck,' and some 'Judy.' I'm called 'Pluck,' cause I'm so plucked a going at the gentlemen! Tommy Dunnovan—'Tipperty Tight'—we calls him, cos his trousers is so tight he can hardly move in them sometimes,—he was the first as called me 'Judy.' Dunnovan once swallowed a pill for a shilling. A gentleman in the Haymarket says—'If you'll swallow this here pill I'll give you a shilling;' and Jimmy says, 'All right, sir;' and he puts it in his mouth, and went to the water-pails near the cab-stand and swallowed it.

"All the chaps in our gang likes me, and we all likes one another. We always shows what we gets given to us to eat.

"Sometimes we gets one another up wild, and then that fetches up a fight, but that isn't often. When two of us fights, the others stands round and sees fair play. There was a fight last night between 'Broke his Bones'—as we calls Antony Hones—and Neddy Hall—the 'Sparrow,' or 'Spider,' we calls him,—something about the root of a pineapple, as we was aiming with at one another, and that called up a fight. We all stood round and saw them at it, but neither of 'em licked, for they gived in for to-day, and they're to finish it to-night. We makes 'em fight fair. We all of us likes to see a fight, but not to fight ourselves. Hones is sure to beat, as Spider is as thin as a wafer, and all bones. I can lick the Spider, though he's twice my size."

THE STREET WHERE THE BOY-SWEEPERS LODGED.

I WAS anxious to see the room in which the gang of boy crossing-sweepers lived, so that I might judge of their peculiar style of housekeeping, and form some notion of their principles of domestic economy.

I asked young Harry and "the Goose" to conduct me to their lodgings, and they at once consented, "the Goose" prefacing his compliance with the remark, that "it wern't such as genilmen had been accustomed to, but then I must take 'em as they was."

The boys led me in the direction of Drury-lane; and before entering one of the narrow streets which branch off like the side-bones of a fish's spine from that long thoroughfare, they thought fit to caution me that I was not to be frightened, as nobody would touch me, for all was very civil.

The locality consisted of one of those narrow streets which, were it not for the paved cartway in the centre would be called a court. Seated on the pavement at each side of the entrance was a costerwoman with her basket before her, and her legs tucked up mysteriously under her gown into a round ball, so that her figure resembled in shape the plaster tumblers sold by the Italians. These women remained as inanimate as if they had been carved images, and it was only when a passenger went by that they gave signs of life, by calling out in a low voice, like talking to themselves, "Two for three haarpence—herrens," — "Fine hinguns."

The street itself is like the description given of thoroughfares in the East. Opposite neighbours could not exactly shake hands out of window, but they could talk together very comfortably; and, indeed, as I passed along, I observed several women with their arms folded up like a cat's paws on the sill, and chatting with their friends over the way.

Nearly all the inhabitants were costermongers, and, indeed, the narrow cartway seemed to have been made just wide enough for a truck to wheel down it. A beershop and a general store, together with a couple of sweeps,—whose residences were distinguished by a broom over the door,—formed the only exceptions to the street-selling class of inhabitants.

As I entered the place, it gave me the notion that it belonged to a distinct coster colony, and formed one large hawkers' home; for everybody seemed to be doing just as he liked, and I was stared at as if considered an intruder. Women were seated on the pavement, knitting, and repairing their linen; the doorways were filled up with bonnetless girls, who wore their shawls over their head, as the Spanish women do their mantillas; and the youths in corduroy and brass buttons, who were chatting with them, leant against the walls as they smoked their pipes, and blocked up the pavement, as if they were the proprietors of the place. Little children formed a convenient bench out of the kerbstone; and a party of four men were seated on the footway, playing with cards which had turned to the colour of brown paper from long usage, and marking the points with chalk upon the flags.

The parlour-windows of the houses had all of them wooden shutters, as thick and clumsy-looking as a kitchen flap-table, the paint of which had turned to the dull dirt-colour of an old slate. Some of these shutters were evidently never used as a security for the dwelling, but served only as tables on which to chalk the accounts of the day's sales.

Before most of the doors were costermongers' trucks—some standing ready to be wheeled off, and others stained and muddy with the day's work. A few of the costers were dressing up their barrows, arranging the sieves of waxy-looking potatoes—and others taking the stiff herrings, browned like a meerschaum with the smoke they had been dried in, from the barrels beside them, and spacing them out in pennyworths on their trays.

You might guess what each costermonger had taken out that day by the heap of refuse swept into the street before the doors. One house had a blue mound of mussel-shells in front of it—another, a pile of the outside leaves of broccoli and cabbages, turning yellow and slimy with bruises and moisture.

Hanging up beside some of the doors were bundles of old strawberry pottles, stained red with the fruit. Over the trap-doors to the cellars were piles of market-gardeners' sieves, ruddled like a sheep's back with big red letters. In fact, everything that met the eye seemed to be in some way connected with the coster's trade.

From the windows poles stretched out, on which blankets, petticoats, and linen were drying; and so numerous were they, that they reminded me of the flags hung out at a Paris fête. Some of the sheets had patches as big as trap-doors let into their centres; and the blankets were—many of them—as full of holes as a pigeon-house.

As I entered the court, a "row" was going on; and from a first-floor window a lady, whose hair sadly wanted brushing, was haranguing a crowd beneath, throwing her arms about like a drowning man, and in her excitement thrusting her body half out of her temporary rostrum as energetically as I have seen Punch lean over his theatre.

"The willin dragged her," she shouted, "by the hair of her head, at least three yards into the court—the willin! and then he kicked her, and the blood was on his boot."

It was a sweep who had been behaving in this cowardly manner; but still he had his defenders in the women around him. One with very shiny hair, and an Indian kerchief round her neck, answered the lady in the window, by calling her a "d——d old cat;" whilst the sweep's wife rushed about, clapping her hands together as quickly as if she was applauding at a theatre, and styled somebody or other "an old wagabones as she wouldn't dirty her hands to fight with."

This "row" had the effect of drawing all the lodgers to the windows—their heads popping out as suddenly as dogs from their kennels in a fancier's yard.

The Boy-Sweepers' Room.

The room where the boys lodged was scarcely bigger than a coach-house; and so low was the ceiling, that a fly-paper suspended from a clothes-line was on a level with my head, and had to be carefully avoided when I moved about.

One corner of the apartment was completely filled up by a big four-post bedstead, which fitted into a kind of recess as perfectly as if it had been built to order.

The old woman who kept this lodging had endeavoured to give it a homely look of comfort, by hanging little black-framed pictures, scarcely bigger than pocket-books, on the walls. Most of these were sacred subjects, with large yellow glories round the heads; though between the drawing representing the bleeding heart of Christ, and the Saviour bearing the Cross, was an illustration of a red-waistcoated sailor smoking his pipe. The Adoration of the Shepherds, again, was matched on the other side of the fireplace by a portrait of Daniel O'Connell.

A chest of drawers was covered over with a green baize cloth, on which books, shelves, and clean glasses were tidily set out.

Where so many persons (for there were about eight of them, including the landlady, her daughter, and grandson) could all sleep, puzzled me extremely.

The landlady wore a frilled nightcap, which fitted so closely to the skull, that it was evident she had lost her hair. One of her eyes was slowly recovering from a blow, which, to use her own words, "a blackgeyard gave her." Her lip, too, had suffered in the encounter, for it was swollen and cut.

"I've a nice flock-bid for the boys," she said, when I inquired into the accommodation of her lodging-house, "where three of them can slape aisy and comfortable."

"It's a large bed, sir," said one of the boys, "and a warm covering over us; and you see it's better than a regular lodging-house; for, if you want a knife or a cup, you don't have to leave something on it till it's returned."

The old woman spoke up for her lodgers, telling me that they were good boys, and very honest; "for," she added, "they pays me rig'lar ivery night, which is threepence."

The only youth as to whose morals she seemed to be at all doubtful was "the Goose," "for he kept late hours, and sometimes came home without a penny in his pocket."

B. The Girl Crossing-Sweepers.

The Girl Crossing-Sweeper sent out by her Father.

A little girl, who worked by herself at her own crossing, gave me some curious information on the subject.

This child had a peculiarly flat face, with a button of a nose, while her mouth was scarcely larger than a button-hole. When she spoke, there was not the slightest expression visible in her features; indeed, one might have fancied she wore a mask and was talking behind it; but her eyes were shining the while as brightly as those of a person in a fever, and kept moving about, restless with her timidity. The green frock she wore was fastened close to the neck, and was turning into a kind of mouldy tint; she also wore a black stuff apron, stained with big patches of gruel, "from feeding baby at home, as she said." Her hair was tidily dressed, being drawn tightly back from the forehead, like the buy-a-broom girls; and as she stood with her hands thrust up her sleeves, she curtseyed each time before answering, bobbing down like a float, as though the floor under her had suddenly given way.

"I'm twelve years old, please sir, and my name is Margaret R——, and I sweep a crossing in New Oxford-street, by Dunn's-passage, just facing Moses and Sons', sir; by the Catholic school, sir. Mother's been dead these two year, sir, and father's a working cutler, sir; and I lives with him, but he don't get much to do, and so I'm obligated to help him, doing what I can, sir. Since mother's been dead, I've had to mind my little brother and sister, so that I haven't been to school; but when I goes a crossing-sweeping I takes them along with me, and they sits on the steps close by, sir. If it's wet I has to stop at home and take care of them, for father depends upon me for looking after them. Sister's three and a-half year old, and brother's five year, so he's just beginning to help me, sir. I hope he'll get something better than a crossing when he grows up.

"First of all I used to go singing songs in the streets, sir. It was when father had no work, so he stopped at home and looked after the children. I used to sing the 'Red, White, and Blue,' and 'Mother, is the Battle over?' and 'The Gipsy Girl,' and sometimes I'd get fourpence or fivepence, and sometimes I'd have a chance of making ninepence, sir. Sometimes, though, I'd take a shilling of a Saturday night in the markets.

"At last the songs grew so stale people wouldn't listen to them, and, as I carn't read, I couldn't learn any more, sir. My big brother and father used to learn me some, but I never could get enough out of them for the streets; besides, father was out of work still, and we couldn't get money enough to buy ballads with, and it's no good singing without having them to sell. We live over there, sir, (pointing to a window on the other side of the narrow street).

"The notion come into my head all of itself to sweep crossings, sir. As I used to go up Regent-street I used to see men and women, and girls and boys, sweeping, and the people giving them money, so I thought I'd do the same thing. That's how it come about. Just now the weather is so dry, I don't go to my crossing, but goes out singing. I've learnt some new songs, such as 'The Queen of the Navy for ever,' and 'The Widow's Last

Prayer,' which is about the wars. I only go sweeping in wet weather, because then's the best time. When I am there, there's some ladies and gentlemen as gives to me regular. I knows them by sight; and there's a beer-shop where they give me some bread and cheese whenever I go.

"I generally takes about sixpence, or sevenpence, or eightpence on the crossing, from about nine o'clock in the morning till four in the evening, when I come home. I don't stop out at nights because father won't let me, and I'm got to be home to see to baby.

"My broom costs me twopence ha'penny, and in wet weather it lasts a week, but in dry weather we seldom uses it.

"When I sees the busses and carriages coming I stands on the side, for I'm afeard of being runned over. In winter I goes out and cleans ladies' doors, general about Lincoln's-inn, for the housekeepers. I gets twopence a door, but it takes a long time when the ice is hardened, so that I carn't do only about two or three.

"I carn't tell whether I shall always stop at sweeping, but I've no clothes, and so I carn't get a situation; for, though I'm small and young, yet I could do housework, such as cleaning.

"No, sir, there's no gang on my crossing—I'm all alone. If another girl or a boy was to come and take it when I'm not there, I should stop on it as well as him or her, and go shares with 'em."

Girl Crossing-Sweeper.

I was told that a little girl formed one of the association of young sweepers, and at my request one of the boys went to fetch her.

She was a clean-washed little thing, with a pretty, expressive countenance, and each time she was asked a question she frowned, like a baby in its sleep, while thinking of the answer. In her ears she wore instead of rings loops of string, "which the doctor had put there because her sight was wrong." A cotton velvet bonnet, scarcely larger than the sun-shades worn at the sea-side, hung on her shoulders, leaving exposed her head, with the hair as rough as tow. Her green stuff gown was hanging in tatters, with long three-cornered rents as large as penny kites, showing the grey lining underneath; and her mantle was separated into so many pieces, that it was only held together by the braiding at the edge.

As she conversed with me, she played with the strings of her bonnet, rolling them up as if curling them, on her singularly small and also singularly dirty fingers.

"I'll be fourteen, sir, a fortnight before next Christmas. I was born in Liquorpond-street, Gray's Inn-lane. Father come over from Ireland, and was a bricklayer. He had pains in his limbs and wasn't strong enough, so he give it over. He's dead now—been dead a long time, sir. I was a littler girl then than I am now, for I wasn't above eleven at that time. I lived with mother after father died. She used to sell things in the streets—yes, sir, she was a coster. About a twelvemonth after father's death, mother was taken bad with the cholera, and died. I then went along with both grandmother and grandfather, who was a porter in Newgate Market; I stopped there until I got a place as servant of all-work. I was only turned, just turned, eleven then. I worked along with a French lady and gentleman in Hatton Garden, who used to give me a shilling a-week and my tea. I used to go home to grandmother's to dinner every day. I hadn't to do any work, only just to clean the room and nuss the child. It was a nice little thing. I couldn't understand what the French people used to say, but there was a boy working there, and he used to explain to me what they meant.

"I left them because they was going to a place called Italy—perhaps you may have heerd tell of it, sir. Well, I suppose they must have been Italians, but we calls everybody, whose talk we don't understand, French. I went back to grandmother's, but, after grandfather died, she couldn't keep me, and so I went out begging—she sent me. I carried lucifer-matches and stay-laces fust. I used to carry about a dozen laces, and perhaps I'd sell six out of them. I suppose I used to make about sixpence a-day, and I used to take it home to grandmother, who kept and fed me.

"At last, finding I didn't get much at begging, I thought I'd go crossing-sweeping. I saw other children doing it. I says to myself, 'I'll go and buy a broom,' and I spoke to another little girl, who was sweeping up Holborn, who told me what I was to do. 'But,' says she, 'don't come and cut up me.'

"I went fust to Holborn, near to home, at the end of Red Lion-street. Then I was frightened of the cabs and carriages, but I'd get there early, about eight o'clock, and sweep the crossing clean, and I'd stand at the side on the pavement, and speak to the gentlemen and ladies before they crossed.

"There was a couple of boys, sweepers at the same crossing before I went there. I went to them and asked if I might come and sweep there too, and they said Yes, if I would give them some of the halfpence I got. These was boys about as old as I was, and they said, if I earned sixpence, I was to give them twopence a-piece; but they never give me nothink of theirs. I never took more than sixpence, and out of that I had to give fourpence, so that I did not do so well as with the laces.

"The crossings made my hands sore with the sweeping, and, as I got so little, I thought I'd try somewhere else. Then I got right down to the Fountings in Trafalgar-square, by the crossing at the statey on 'orseback. There were a good many boys and girls on that crossing at the time—five of them; so I went along

with them. When I fust went they said, 'Here's another fresh 'un.' They come up to me and says, 'Are you going to sweep here?' and I says, 'Yes;' and they says, 'You mustn't come here, there's too many;' and I says, 'They're different ones every day,'—for they're not regular there, but shift about, sometimes one lot of boys and girls, and the next day another. They didn't say another word to me, and so I stopped.

"It's a capital crossing, but there's so many of us, it spiles it. I seldom gets more than sevenpence a-day, which I always takes home to grandmother.

"I've been on that crossing about three months. They always calls me Ellen, my regular name, and behaves very well to me. If I see anybody coming, I call them out as the boys does, and then they are mine.

"There's a boy and myself, and another strange girl, works on our side of the statey, and another lot of boys and girls on the other.

"I like Saturdays the best day of the week, because that's the time as gentlemen as has been at work has their money, and then they are more generous. I gets more then, perhaps ninepence, but not quite a shilling, on the Saturday.

"I've had a threepenny-bit give to me, but never sixpence. It was a gentleman, and I should know him again. Ladies gives me less than gentlemen. I foller 'em, saying, 'If you please, sir, give a poor girl a halfpenny;' but if the police are looking, I stop still.

"I never goes out on Sunday, but stops at home with grandmother. I don't stop out at nights like the boys, but I gets home by ten at latest."

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHARING CROSS.

INDEX.

Articles for amusement, second-hand sellers of, 18

Bear-baiting, 62
Bedding, &c., second-hand sellers of, 17
Bird-catchers who are street-sellers, 74
—— duffers, tricks of, 79
—— street-seller, the crippled, 76
Birds'-nests, sellers of, 82
—— life of a, 84
Birds, stuffed, sellers of, 27
—— live, sellers of, 66
—— foreign, sellers of, 80
Bone-grubbers, 154
—— narrative of a, 156
Boots and shoes, second-hand, sellers of, 48
Boy crossing-sweepers' room, 570
Brisk and slack seasons, 367
Brushes, second-hand, sellers of, 26
Burnt linen or calico, 15

Cabinet-ware, second-hand, sellers of, 26
Casual labour in general, 367
—— brisk and slack seasons, 367
—— among the chimney-sweeps, 424
Carpeting, &c., second-hand, sellers of, 16
Cesspool emptying by trunk and hose, 506
Cesspool system of London, 495
—— of Paris, 496
Cesspool-sewerman, statement of a, 508
Cesspoolage and nightmen, 491
Chimney-sweepers, the London, 382
—— of old, and climbing-boys, 392
—— stealing children, 393
—— sores and diseases, 396
—— accidents, 397
—— cruelties towards, 398
—— of the present day, 400
—— work and wages, 407
—— general characteristics of, 409
—— dress and diet, 414
—— abodes, 415
—— festival at May-day, 421
—— "leeks," 426
—— knullers and queriers, 426
Cigar-end finders, 161
Clocks, second-hand, sellers of, 27
Clothes worn in town and country, table showing comparative cost of, 216
Coal, consumption of, 189
—— sellers of, 93
Coke, sellers of, 97
Commissioners of Sewers, powers of, 472
"Coshar" meat killed for the Jews, 135
Criminals, number of, in England and Wales, 362
Crossing-sweeper, the aristocratic, 529
—— the bearded, 535
—— a Regent-street, 538
—— a tradesman's, 540
—— "old woman over the water," 541
—— old woman who had been a pensioner, 542
—— one who had been a servant-maid, 543
—— the female Irish, 546
—— the Sunday, 550
—— the wooden-legged, 552
—— the one-legged, 554
—— the most severely afflicted, 554
—— the negro who lost both his legs, 556
—— the maimed Irish, 559
—— Mike's statement, 564
—— Gander, the captain, 565
—— the king of the tumbling-boy crossing-sweepers, 567
—— the girl sweeper sent out by her father, 572
Crossing-sweepers, 527
—— able-bodied male, 529
—— who have got permission from the police, narratives of, 536
—— able-bodied Irish, 545
—— the occasional, 550
—— the afflicted, 552
—— boy, and tumblers, 560
—— where they lodge, 571
—— their room, 570
—— girl, 571
Curiosities, second-hand, sellers of, 25
Curtains, second-hand, sellers of, 16

Dog "finder's" career, a, 59
Dog-finders, stealers, and restorers, the former, 56
Dog-finders, extent of their trade, 57
Dogs, sellers of, 60
—— sporting, sellers of, 62
"Dolly" business, the, 120
Dredgers, the, or river-finders, 165
Dust-contractors, 187
Dust-heap, composition of a, 190
—— separation of, 191
Dustmen, the, 187
—— "filler" and "carrier," 184
—— their general character, 197
Dustmen, sweeps, and nightmen, 177
—— number of, 197

Employers, "cutting," varieties of, 262
—— "drivers," 263
—— "grinders," 263

Fires of London, 428
—— abstract of causes of, 429
—— extinction of, 431
Flushermen, the working, 486
—— history of an individual, 488
Furs, second-hand, sellers of, 51

Gander, the "captain" of the boy sweepers, 565
Garret workmen, labour of, 342
Glass and crockery, second-hand, sellers of, 17
Gold and silver fish, sellers of, 90

Hare and rabbit skins, buyers of, 123
Harness, second-hand, sellers of, 27
Hill men and women, 193
Hogs'-wash, buyers of, 146
Home work, 353
Horse, food consumed by, and excretions in twenty-four hours, 218
Horse-dung of the streets of London, 217
—— gross annual weight of, 219
House-drainage, as connected with the sewers, 491

Iron Jack, 13

Jew old clothes-men, 133
—— street-seller, life of a, 136
—— boy street-sellers, 136
—— their pursuits, traffic, &c., 137
—— girl street-sellers, 138
—— sellers of accordions, &c., 145
Jews, the street, 127
—— history of, 129
—— trades and localities, 129
—— habits and diet, 135
—— synagogues and religion, 138
—— politics, literature, and amusements, 139
—— charities, schools, and education, 141
—— funeral ceremonies, fasts, and customs, 145
Jewesses, street, the, 138

Kitchen-stuff, grease, and dripping, buyers of, 123
Knullers and queriers, 426

Labour, economy of, 347
Lasts, second-hand, sellers of, 27
"Leeks," the, 426
Leverets, wild rabbits, &c., sellers of, 89
Linen, second-hand, sellers of, 15
Live animals, sellers of, 55
London street drains, 450
—— extent of, 454
—— order of, 454
—— outlets, ramifications, &c., of, 459
Low wages, remedies for, 286
"Lurker's," a, career, 59

Marine-store shops, 120
May-day, 421
—— sweeps' festival, 421
Men's second-hand clothes, sellers of, 46
Metal trays, second-hand, sellers of, 14
Metropolitan police district, the, 177
—— inhabited houses, 183
—— population, 184
"Middleman" system of work, 373
Monmouth-street, Dickens's description of, 41
Mud-larks, 173
—— story of a reclaimed, 174
Mineral productions and natural curiosities, sellers of, 93

Music "duffers," 23
Musical instruments, second-hand, sellers of, 20

Night-soil, present disposal of, 509
Nightmen, the, working and mode of work, 510

Offal, how disposed of, 9
Old Clothes Exchange, the, 30
—— wholesale business at the, 31
—— old clothes-men, 129
Old hats, sellers of, 49
Old John, the waterman, statement of, 543
Old woman "over the water," the, 541
Old wood gatherers, 162

Paris, cesspool and sewer system of, 502
—— rag-gatherers of, 157
Paupers, street-sweeping, narratives of, 277
—— number of, in England and Wales, 362
Petticoat-lane, street-sellers of, 42
"Pure" finders, 158
—— narrative of a female, 160
Purl-men, the, 107

"Rag and bottle" shops, 120
Rag-gatherers, 155
Rags, broken metal, bottles, glass, and bone, buyers of, 118
"Ramoneur Company," the, 423
Rat-killing, 64
River beer-sellers, 107
River finders, 165
Rosemary-lane, street-sellers of, 45
Rubbish-carters, the, 317, 326
—— wages and perquisites of, 328
—— social characteristics of, 331
—— casual labourers among, 365
—— scurf trade among, 369

Salt, sellers of, 103
Sand, sellers of, 104
Scavenger, statement of a "regular," 252
Scavengers, master, of former times, 231
—— oath of, 232
—— working, 242
—— labour and rates of payment, 246
—— "casual hands," 247
—— habits and diet, 255
—— influence of free trade on their earnings, 256
—— worse paid, the, 261
Scavengery, contractors for, 235
—— regulations of, 236
—— premises of, 242
Scavenging, jet and hose system of, 311
Scurf-labourers, 266
Scurf-labourer, statement of, 267
Second-hand apparel, sellers of, 28
—— articles, sellers of, 7
—— experience of a dealer in, 13
—— articles, live animals, productions, &c., street-sellers of, their numbers, capital, and income, 110
—— garments, uses of, 33
—— varieties of, 36
—— store shops, 28
—— miscellaneous articles, street-sellers of, 26
Seven-dials, Dickens's description of, 41
Sewage, metropolitan, quantity of, 439
—— qualities and uses of, 456
Sewerage, the City, 457
—— new plan of, 465
Sewerage and scavengery, London, history of, 101
Sewers, ancient, 440
—— kinds and characteristics of, 442
—— subterranean character of, 446
—— house-drainage in connection with, 447
Sewers, ventilation of, 479
—— flushing and plunging, 480
—— rats in the, 489
—— management of the, and the late Commission, 470
—— Commissioners, powers of, 472
—— rate, 479
Sewer-hunters, 168
—— numbers of, 170
—— strange tale of, 172
Sewermen and nightmen of London, 433
Shells, sellers of, 105
Shoddy mills, 34
—— fever, 35
Smithfield market, second-hand sellers at, 52
Smoke, evils of, 333
—— scientific opinions upon, 334
Squirrels, sellers of, 89
"Strapping" system, the, illustration of, 344
Street-buyers, the, varieties of, 115
Street-cleansing, modes and characteristics of, 233
—— men and carts employed in, 239
—— pauper labour employed in, 272
—— narratives of individuals, 277
Street-finders or collectors, varieties of, 152
Street-folk, census of, 1
—— capital and trade, 2
—— proscription of, 3
—— rate of increase, 7
Street-muck, or "mac," 222
—— uses of, 222
—— value of, 223
Street Jews, the, 127
Street-orderlies, the, 285
—— condition of, 296
—— expenditure of, 301
—— earnings of, 304
—— City surveyor's report of, 305
Street-sweeping, employers, 235
—— parishes, 235
—— philanthropists, 285
—— machines, 268
—— hands employed, 269
Streets of London, how paved, 203
—— traffic of, 206
—— dust and dirt of, 207
—— loss and injury from, 207
—— mud of the, 224
—— cost and traffic of, 314
—— tables of traffic, 318
Sweeping chimneys of steam-vessels, 422
Surface-water of the streets of London, 226
—— analysis of, 231

Table showing the master sweeps, &c., employed, 512
Tan-turf, sellers of, 99
Tea-leaves, buyers of, 149
Telescopes and pocket-glasses, second-hand, sellers of, 26
"Translators" of old shoes, 40
—— extent of the trade, 41
Tumbling boy-sweepers, king of the, 567

Umbrellas and parasols, buyers of, 127

Washing expenses in London, 214
Waste-paper, buyers of, 125
Water, daily supply of the metropolis, 229
Watermen's Company, form of licence, 109
Weapons, second-hand, sellers of, 24
Wet house-refuse, 433
—— means of removing, 437
Women's second-hand apparel, sellers of, 50
Wrappers or "bale stuff," 15

Young Mike the crossing-sweeper, 564

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Returning from the undiscovered country of the poor to draw his great sprawling plan, working by fits and starts, helped by collaborators and friends, urged by the printer and the importunities of creditors, Mayhew produced the huge, faulty masterpiece. It resembles the maps of the early navigators, bold, tentative, challenging. In his lifetime it imposed a burden of guilty knowledge upon all who could afford to buy it. Nowadays the artist has more claim upon us than the sociologist, and Mr. Quennell's judicious selection of the living matter from the dead has happily set him free.

vincing evidence that this activity of thinking was effectively transmuted into art. He offers us Tennyson as making poetry out of the facts of science in the manner predicted by Wordsworth, but his claim remains mere statement, supported by two inadequate examples and some enthusiastic original verses ("Homage to Tennyson, 1940") which scarcely advance the argument.

Two essays on the novel round off the collection, the first a rather light-

well as to his correspondents. Can I say everything that comes into my head, if posterity stands behind my chair?" In the event, almost everything that came into that capacious and retentive head has had posterity's approval.

Mr. Ketton-Cremer, himself like Sir Robert Walpole a Norfolk squire, and author of a good Life of Horace, contributes an engaging introduction, and an elegant volume is embellished with portraits of the author and seven of his correspondents.

LONE SOCIETY REPRINTS

red-hot iron. The Duke's shipwrecked heir is enticed by Hoffman into the cave and submitted to the same torture. Hoffman succeeds in impersonating the murdered prince, makes his way to court and wreaks his vengeance upon his father's enemies, but is finally unmasked and himself condemned to wear the burning crown.

Chettle's sombre imagination and the concentrated force of his language keep the action moving with energy and create moments of real horror. But the play lacks a moral centre, and since the dramatist penetrates but shallowly into the guiding motives of the actors, the effect seldom rises above poetic Grand-Guignol. Still, Chettle is already handling the conventional theme of filial revenge in a subtler fashion than some of his predecessors, in that the spirit of the murdered father is represented not as a ghost but as a relentless evil presence in the mind of the young Hoffman, and the Revenger himself—as later in Tourneur—is conceived not as the hero but as the villain of the tragedy. But perhaps the most striking episode of the whole play is the passage which describes the madness of Lucibella, who has lost her reason after the murder of her betrothed. This scene, not only in its general conception but in many separate phrases and images, constantly recalls the madness of Ophelia:

For I am going to the rivers side
To fetch white lillies and blew daffadils
To sticke in Lodowicks bosome, where it
bled. . . .

After the harsh and monotonous read of Chettle's verse, *Demetrius and Enanthe* offers a complete and agreeable contrast. This play, better known as *The Humorous Lieutenant*, is a slight but charming historical comedy probably written between 1619 and 1623 among the latest of Fletcher's plays. The text here is derived not from the 1647 Folio but from the Crane manuscript of 1625. This was printed by Dyce in 1830 but with many departures from the spelling and punctuation of the original. The present version corrects a number of Dyce's readings and can claim to be more accurately based on the manuscript than either the Variorum edition of 1905 or the later Cambridge text.

The Humorous Lieutenant is the protagonist of the sub-plot, which is based on the story from Plutarch's *Life of Pelopidas* of the soldier who fights heroically while he believes he is incurably diseased but regains his health only to lose his valour. The main action consists of one of those courtly love affairs of which Fletcher is a master raconteur, perpetually holding back by unexpected but graceful reversals of fortune the final reward of his lovers' constancy. Celia (Enanthe) is among the most spirited of his heroines and it is a genuine nobility and passion which repeatedly break out from her speeches:

I am aboue your hate, as far aboue it
in all the Actions of an Inocent life
as the pure Starrs are, from the muddy
Meteors:

Both editions are handsomely produced and follow the Malone Society's custom of employing, as far as possible (without notes or glossary), the spelling and punctuation of the originals. The broader type and more generous spacing of *Demetrius and Enanthe* render it visually much the more attractive book.

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MAYHEW'S LONDON

It was the author's hope that *London Labour and the London Poor* might make the rich more aware of the wretched condition of the poor and increase the amount of real charity in the world. Mayhew was one of the generous men of his time, touched by the time-spirit of compassion. He lived in a London darker and more maimed even than the city which had saddened Blake, and an epigraph for the first three volumes of his work might easily be found in *Auguries of Innocence*:

> The beggar's rags, fluttering in air,
> Does to rags the heavens tear.

It was Blake's tragic society, suffering extreme poverty and great riches to exist side by side; its portrait, honestly drawn, laid a burden on the conscience of all who looked upon it. Mayhew was a pioneer in the exploration of the dark levels of mid-nineteenth-century society, and the reports which he and his collaborators brought back helped to intensify the sense of guilt which accelerated reform. In this respect the sociological journalist can be aligned, though his work comes a little later in time, with great writers like Gogol and Dickens who sought to kindle fires of anger and pity in which social evil might be destroyed.

No modern reprint of *London Labour and the London Poor* in its entirety has been published. Mr. Peter Quennell has now completed the series of selections, begun in *Mayhew's London* and carried on in *London's Underworld*, with *Mayhew's Characters*, and it is time to ask just how fully Mayhew's work is represented in them, and what service they do to the almost legendary author—legendary, for Mayhew is more often talked about than read. The selections have undoubtedly helped to make Mayhew popular with modern readers, certainly more so than an academic presentation of the whole work could have done, but the question whether Mayhew is fairly put before us in them remains. In his introduction to the first volume Mr. Quennell writes that he has concentrated on "the more graphic and personal side of Mayhew's massive survey." When, with this in mind, it is observed that only one-twelfth or thereabouts of *Mayhew's London* is devoted to the poor labourers ("the cheap men, or non-society hands—who constitute the great mass of paupers in this country," says Mayhew) and that the costermongers get more space than this "great mass," it is not unreasonable, if one does not know the original, to entertain doubts of the representative value of the selection. Similarly, in *Mayhew's Characters*, two-thirds of the articles are about entertainers and street-traders. Has Mayhew's sociological purpose been sacrificed for the sake of greater readability?

The answer is that it has not. If the mighty sociologist does not emerge as expected from Mr. Quennell's selections, the fault is nobody's but Mayhew's. The magnificent force of his title promised more than he performed. Mayhew was a noble spirit, a great journalist and an incorrigible planner. He had the scheming energy of a Balzac, but he lacked the formal sense to discipline it properly. He conceived one mammoth work, to be published in shilling numbers, called *The Great World of London*, which was to comprehend the whole life of the capital. He even went up in a balloon and glutted his conceit with an aerial view of the world to be conquered. The project was as ambitious as the survey of Paris which Maxime du Camp attempted 20 years later. But after a few numbers it dwindled into an account of the London prisons and a collaborator had to bring it to a timely end. *London Labour and the London Poor* had an infinitely happier fate, but it suffered from opportunistic presentation, and it cannot be said to live up to its title. Moreover, it contains a good deal that is tedious or digressive; at one point there is an account of the French omnibuses and notes of the legislation governing their operation. Mayhew had his century's enthusiasm for getting the paper filled and satisfying the printer, with too little regard for the strict relevance of what he was writing. That enthusiasm is not, of course, confined to the Victorians, but there was no paper shortage then to make them think twice.

The disparity in size between the original and these volumes of selections, in fact, is one for which the modern reader should be grateful. Mayhew comes more acceptably to us shorn of his statistics, his lengthy essay on the history of prostitution, and his digressions. By concentrating on the personal and graphic side of his work, Mr. Quennell gives us the Mayhew who wrote and edited at his best. Nor has any injustice been done him in the matter of the poor labourers, for the articles on this subject receive about the same proportion of space as they do in the original. Mayhew never entered into the life of the labourer as he did into that of the street-folk. This was surely a question of temperament, for he had the English passion for eccentricity. He revelled in the incongruous and the odd. The more dramatic characters of riverside and street fascinated him. Crime and organized vice drew him as they have drawn "documentary" writers before and since, and the sociologist in Mayhew was not as strong as the journalist. Above all things he loved the restless passing show of the streets, and early Victorian London seems to have been as thronged with *al fresco* entertainment as Naples or Baghdad or Rome in the days of the decadent Empire. A clown from a circus or a penny-gaff, a stilt-walker, a drum and pipes man, an Ethiopian serenader, a Punch and Judy showman, an exhibitor of Ombres Chinoises or fantoccini, a street-conjuror or a patterer with his "last dying speeches" and tales of Fiends in Human Form found in him as ready and as sympathetic a listener as they would have found in Nodier or Charles Lamb. The monologue of the one-legged Italian who performed the drill of an entire army on general inspection or the tale of a strolling actor are set down with affectionate fidelity.

Mayhew wrote most frequently about the poor people who were most accessible. That is eminently understandable when it is considered that the greater part of the book, necessitating the interviewing of thousands of people, was put together in a couple of years. We have a glimpse of his methods when we hear of him interviewing a coster at his home, his brother Augustus and William Jerrold helping to "draw" the man, while Horace Mayhew, his younger brother, took down what he said. Excursions in the criminal areas with police officers (like Charles Dickens's evening with Inspector Field) and into the moral and physical squalor of the lodging-houses, visits to bars and gin-palaces, ratting establishments, the penny-gaffs, the docks and the riverside, the workhouses and the dark labyrinths of courts and alleys and mean streets required all the tact and fellowship Mayhew had as he sought his material. No doubt he, as well as his subjects, was encouraged by his being able to help the very poor with funds gathered by the *Morning Chronicle*. It was easier to talk to the street-folk than to the members of that exploited majority which strove more obscurely for its bare subsistence. The fact that he wrote for a large periodical public also influenced his selection. Yet he had the born journalist's power of discerning narrative and dramatic shape in the everyday confusion, his eye for significant detail, his ear for the give-away phrase.

It is not going too far to associate with Defoe the writer who, interrogating a woman in a bar and asking how she came to be in her present plight, recorded the reply: "Oh, I'm a seduced milliner," she said, rather impatiently, "anything you like." How the boredom and exasperation, accumulated over the years as "gentleman" after "gentleman" asked that very question of a poor wretch who wanted nothing but to be paid and be rid of them, charges her answer! Mayhew had a talent, too, for bringing to life the setting in which his people moved—sketchy, perhaps, but authoritative with observed detail:

> The sailors are singing boisterous nigger songs from the Yankee ship just entering; the cooper is hammering at the casks on the quay; the chains of the cranes, loosed of their weight, rattle as they fly up again; the ropes splash in the water; some captain shouts his orders through his hands; a goat bleats from some ship in the basin; and empty casks roll along the stones with a heavy drum-like sound.

He noticed an emigrant, "a sorrowful-looking woman, with new bright cooking tins at her feet." How many writers of the time would have given us the sorrow and forgotten the cooking tins! It is the evocative, atmospheric writing of a man who has really been there.

At its best, the tone of *London Labour and the London Poor* is matter-of-fact. People are allowed to speak for themselves as far as possible. Mayhew is never maudlin, though he is often angry. His account of the child water-cress seller who, at the age of eight, had already been working in the streets for a year, is a model of sobriety. The questions put to her could have elicited stock answers, but the child who comes to life is no melodrama victim. The interviewer asked if she ever saw children crying. "No," she said, "it's no use." Education was also rejected. "I don't know nothing about what I earns during the year, I only knows how many pennies goes to a shilling, and two ha'pence goes to a penny, and four fardens goes to a penny. I knows, too, how many fardens goes to tuppence—eight. That's as much as I wants to know for the markets." She had never heard of the parks, but the interviewer described them. "Her eyes brightened up a little as I spoke; and she asked, half doubtingly, 'Would they let such as me go there—just to look?'" Another example of pathos is the story of the old street-haberdasher, struggling to keep a dying husband, where again the objective handling of the subject gives it dignity and life. That is the art and the greatness of Mayhew: he saw people as individuals, not as social phenomena or pretexts for fine writing.

The humour which relieves the book, and without which it would be unbearably sad, is generally reflected by the characters themselves. Mayhew, the ready jester, who invented that hardy perennial, "Advice to Those About to Marry—Don't!" imposed few flippancies here. The streets of London needed no jokers from above. There was the street-boy who admitted "he had heerd that the earth went round the sun but from what he'd noticed shouldn't have thought it," and the other, questioned about the Queen, who said he believed she was called "Wictoria and Albert." There was the sewerman who compared his present lot with his service oversea and remarked cheerfully and without irony, "I prefer the sewers to the Greek islands." Sturdy insularity has no better spokesman. Humanitarian sentiment entered strangely into the pickled whelk trade. "They never kicks as they boils, like lobsters or crabs," said one whelk dealer, "they takes it quiet. A missionary cove said to me, 'Why don't you kill them first? It's murder.' *They* doesn't suffer; *I've* suffered more with a toothache than the whole of a measure of whelks has in a boiling, that I'm clear upon." Connoisseurship of the arts is reflected complacently as a pea-soup and hot-eel man, after a visit to Astley's Circus, remarked "that he and his good lady had been werry amused with the osses at Hashley's last night." A whole tradition of rough humour seems to have died in the nineteenth century in England. If it lingers still, it is in the dialect and grimace of the inveterate Cockneys who still earn their living in the London streets. Mayhew was one of the last to catch the characteristic tone of that humour, which we find so often in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Fielding, Hogarth, Smollett, Rowlandson and Dickens. Perhaps it depended for its vitality upon the more dangerous and savage aspects of life which Mayhew described.

Another of Mayhew's priceless gifts as a realist was his intense concern with how things were done. The author of *Robinson Crusoe* possessed it to no greater degree. Mayhew explained a conjuring trick with as much seriousness as he detailed the stages of a fall from virtue. If anyone were minded to set up in business as a snake-swallower or a begging-letter writer, he need look no further. Again one thinks of Balzac's absorption in the mechanics of making a living. Mayhew gave precise instructions for the making of false coin and *Moll Flanders'* author might envy Mayhew's assembly of criminal techniques and tricks—the whole artifice of pick-pockets, burglars, con men, sneak-thieves, embezzlers, and a host of others is set forth minutely. Most enthralling of all in *Mayhew's Characters* is the Street Fire-King, or Salamander, who surely made a poor living more dangerously than most people, for he ate lighted links, had gunpowder exploded in the palms of his hands, consumed lighted sulphur, breathed out flame, and shot down amid flames on a wire from the Eel-pie-house, Peckham. Mayhew gives detailed explanations of how all these matters may be accomplished, as explained to him by the Salamander himself. One agrees, though, with the amiable costermonger who remarked, "I say, old boy, your game ain't all brandy." Mayhew had the narrative artist's aptitude for involving his readers in the story. One reads about the Salamander with bated breath.

It was a great story Mayhew had to tell, too, and one that cried out, in his own time, to be told. One hundred years later it stands as a monument of humanism, a powerful, bizarre, sinister evocation of the past. Now that so much of the exploitation and horror and indifference of that London has passed or been swept away, it is not easy to realize that the past which Mayhew has preserved in such detail is our own. The sombre map unrolled in *London Labour and the London Poor* seems like the map of a world separated from us by more than time. The toleration of such grotesque brutality, turpitude, inhumanity, filth, crime and disease belongs to a historical nightmare. Yet there is no reason to believe that the writers exaggerated; if their survey had been more complete and less idiosyncratic the picture would have been darker still. Their prime motive was curiosity, and it enabled them to tell the truth. Therein lay the element of reassurance. They were not proving a thesis but recording what they found. Very often they saw that among the poorest there was a zest for the daily struggle, and a stubbornly nourished pride. The goodness as well as the evil is there, and the marvellous toughness and resilience of human beings is a recurrent theme.

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Mayhew's Characters. 21s. *Mayhew's London.* 25s. *London's Underworld.* 18s. Edited by Peter Quennell. William Kimber.