

doors for money, which an Englishman has hardly face for. I'm now with a fantoccini figures from Canton, brought over by a seaman. I can't form an exact notion of how many men there are in town who are musicians to the street exhibitions; besides the exhibitions' own people, I should say about one hundred. I don't think that they are more drunken than other people, but they're liable to get top-heavy at times. None that I know live with women of the town. They live in lodgings, and not in lodging-houses. Oh! no, no, we've not come to that yet. Some of them succeeded their fathers as street-musicians; others took it up casualty-like, by having learned different instruments; none that I know were ever theatrical performers. All the men I know in my line would object, I am sure, to hard work, if it was with confinement along with it. We can never stand being confined to hard work, after being used to the freedom of the streets. None of us save money; it goes either in a lump, if we get a lump, or in dribs and drabs, which is the way it mostly comes to us. I've known several in my way who have died in St. Giles's workhouse. In old age or sickness we've nothing but the parish to look to. The newest thing I know of is the singing dogs. I was with that as musician, and it answers pretty well amongst the quality. The dogs is three Tobies to a Punch-and-Judy show, and they sing,—that is, they make a noise,—it's really a howl,—but they keep time with Mr. Punch as he sings."

III.—STREET VOCALISTS.

THE Street Vocalists are almost as large a body as the street musicians. It will be seen that there are 50 Ethiopian serenaders, and above 250 who live by ballad-singing alone.

STREET NEGRO SERENADERS.

AT present I shall deal with the Ethiopian serenaders, and the better class of ballad-singers. Two young men who are of the former class gave the following account. Both were dressed like decent mechanics, with perfectly clean faces, excepting a little of the professional black at the root of the hair on the forehead:—

"We are niggers," said one man, "as it's commonly called; that is, negro melodists. Nigger bands vary from four to seven, and have numbered as many as nine; our band is now six. We all share alike. I (said the same man) was the first who started the niggers in the streets, about four years ago. I took the hint from the performance of Pell and the others at the St. James's. When I first started in the streets I had five performers, four and myself. There were the banjo-player, the bones, fiddle, and tambourine. We are regu-

larly full-dressed, in fashionable black coats and trousers, open white waistcoats, pumps (bluchers some had, just as they could spring them), and wigs to imitate the real negro head of hair. Large white wrists or cuffs came out after. It was rather a venturesome 'spec, the street niggers, for I had to find all the clothes at first start, as I set the school a-going. Perhaps it cost me 6s. a-head all round—all second-hand dress except the wigs, and each man made his own wig out of horse-hair dyed black, and sewn with black thread on to the skin of an old silk hat. Well, we first started at the top of the Liverpool-road, but it was no great success, as we weren't quite up in our parts and didn't play exactly into one another's hands. None of us were perfect, we'd had so few rehearsals. One of us had been a street singer before, another a street fiddler, another had sung nigger-songs in public-houses, the fourth was a mud-lark, and I had been a street singer. I was brought up to no trade regularly. When my father died I was left on the world, and I worked in Marylebone stone-yard, and afterwards sung about the streets, or shifted as I could. I first sung in the streets just before the Queen's coronation—and a hard life it was. But, to tell the truth, I didn't like the thoughts of hard labour—bringing a man in so little, too—that's where it is; and as soon as I could make any sort of living in the streets with singing and such-like, I got to like it. The first 'debew,' as I may say, of the niggers, brought us in about 10s. among us, besides paying for our dinner and a pint of beer a-piece. We were forced to be steady you see, sir, as we didn't know how it would answer. We sang from eleven in the morning till half-past ten at night, summer time. We kept on day after day, not rehearsing, but practising in the streets, for rehearsing in private was of little use—voices are as different in private rooms and the public streets as is chalk from cheese. We got more confidence as we went along. To be sure we had all cheek enough to start with, but this was a fresh line of business. Times mended as we got better at our work. Last year was the best year I've known. We start generally about ten, and play till it's dark in fine weather. We averaged 11. a-week last year. The evenings are the best time. Regent-street, and Oxford-street, and the greater part of St. James's, are our best places. The gentry are our best customers, but we get more from gentlemen than from ladies. The City is good, I fancy, but they won't let us work it; it's only the lower parts, Whitechapel and Smithfield ways, that we have a chance in. Business and nigger-songs don't go well together. The first four days of the week are pretty much alike for our business. Friday is bad, and so is Saturday, until night comes, and we then get money from the working people. The markets, such as Cleveland-street, Fitzroy-square (Tottenham-court-road's no good at any time). Carnaby-market,

Newport-market, Great Marylebone-street, and the Edgeware-road, are good Saturday nights. Oxford-street is middling. The New-cut is as bad a place as can be. When we started, the songs we knew was 'Old Mr. Coon,' 'Buffalo Gals,' 'Going ober de Mountain,' 'Dandy Jim of Carolina,' 'Rowly Boly O,' and 'Old Johnny Booker.' We stuck to them a twelvemonth. The 'Buffalo Gals' was best liked. The 'bones'—we've real bones, rib-of-beef bones, but some have ebony bones, which sound better than rib-bones—they tell best in 'Going ober de Mountain,' for there's a symphony between every line. It's rather difficult to play the bones well; it requires hard practice, and it brings the skin off; and some men have tried it, but with so little success that they broke their bones and flung them away. The banjo is the hardest to learn of the lot. We have kept changing our songs all along; but some of the old ones are still sung. The other favourites are, or were, 'Lucy Neale,' 'O, Susannah,' 'Uncle Ned,' 'Stop dat Knocking,' 'Ginger Blue,' and 'Black-eyed Susannah.' Things are not so good as they were. We can average 11. a-piece now in the week, but it's summer-time, and we can't make that in bad weather. Then there's so many of us. There's the Somers-town 'mob' now in London; the King-street, the four St. Giles's mobs, the East-end (but they're white niggers), the two Westminster mobs, the Marylebone, and the Whitechapel. We interfere with one another's beats sometimes, for we have no arrangement with each other, only we don't pitch near the others when they're at work. The ten mobs now in London will have 50 men in them at least; and there's plenty of stragglers, who are not regular niggers: there's so many dodges now to pick up a living, sir. The Marylebone and Whitechapel lots play at nights in penny theatres. I have played in the Haymarket in 'the New Planet,' but there's no demand for us now at the theatres, except such as the Pavilion. There are all sorts of characters in the different schools, but I don't know any runaway gentleman, or any gentleman of any kind among us, not one; we're more of a poorer sort, if not to say a ragged sort, for some are without shoes or stockings. The 'niggers' that I know have been errand-boys, street-singers, turf-cutters, coalheavers, chandlers, paviours, mud-larks, tailors, shoemakers, tinmen, bricklayers' labourers, and people who have had no line in particular but their wits. I know of no connexion with pickpockets, and don't believe there is any, though pickpockets go round the mobs; but the police fling it in our teeth that we're connected with pickpockets. It's a great injury to us is such a notion. A good many of the niggers—both of us here likes a little drop—drink as hard as they can, and a good many of them live with women of the town. A few are married. Some niggers are Irish. There's Scotch niggers, too. I don't know a

Welsh one, but one of the street nigger-singers is a real black—an African."

STATEMENT OF ANOTHER ETHIOPIAN SERENADER.

"It must be eight years ago," he commenced, "since the Ethiopian serenading come up—aye, it must be at least that time, because the twopenny boats was then running to London-bridge, and it was before the 'Cricket' was blown up. I know that, because we used to work the boats serenading. I used to wear a yellow waistcoat, in imitation of them at the St. James's Theatre.

"The first came out at St. James's Theatre, and they made a deal of money. There were five of them—Pell was bones, Harrington was concertina, I think, White was violin, Stanwood the banjo, and Germain the tambourine. I think that's how it was, but I can easy ascertain. After them sprang up the 'Lantum Serenaders' and the 'Ohio Serenaders,' the 'South Carolina Serenaders,' the 'Kentucky Minstrels,' and many other schools of them; but Pell's gang was at the top of the tree. Juba was along with Pell. Juba was a first class—a regular A 1—he was a regular black, and a splendid dancer in boots.

"As soon as I could get in to vamp the tunes on the banjo a little, I went at it, too. I wasn't long behind them, you may take your oath. We judged it would be a hit, and it was fine. We got more money at it then than we do at any game now. First of all we formed a school of three—two banjos and a tambourine, and after that we added a bones and a fiddle. We used to dress up just the same then as now. We'd black our faces, and get hold of a white hat, and put a black band round it, or have big straw hats and high collars up to the ears. We did uncommonly well. The boys would follow us for miles, and were as good as advertisements, for they'd shout, 'Here's the blacks!' as if they was trumpeting us. The first songs we came out with were 'Old Joe,' 'Dan Tucker,' and 'Going ober de Mountain,' and 'O come along, you sandy boys.' Our opening chorus was 'The Wild Raccoon Track,' and we finished up with the 'Railway Overture,' and it was more like the railway than music, for it was all thumping and whistling, for nobody knowed how to play the banjo then.

"When I went out pitching first I could sing a good song; but it has ruined my voice now, for I used to sing at the top—tenor is the professional term.

"It wasn't everybody as could be a nigger then. We was thought angels then. It's got common now, but still I've no hesitation in saying that, keep steady and sober, and it works well to the present day. You can go and get a good average living now.

"We could then, after our 'mungare' and 'buvare' (that's what we call eat and drink, and I think it's broken Italian), carry home our

5s. or 6s. each, easy. We made long days, and did no night-work. Besides, we was always very indifferent at our business, indeed. I'd be blowed if I'd trust myself out singing as I did then: we should get murdered. It was a new thing, and people thought our blunders was intended. We used to use blacking then to do our faces—we got Messrs. Day and Martin to do our complexion then. Burnt cork and beer wasn't so popular then.

"I continued at the nigger business ever since. I and my mate have been out together, and we've gone out two, and three, or four, up to eleven in a school, and we've shared better when eleven than when we was two. The highest we've got in a day has been 1*l.* 6s. each, at the Portsmouth review, when Napier went out with the fleet, above two years ago. We walked down to Portsmouth a-purpose. We got 14s. 6*d.* each—and there was five of us—at the launch of the 'Albert.'

"The general dress of the nigger is a old white hat and a long-tailed coat; or sometimes, when we first come out, in white waist-coats and coats; or even in striped shirts and wigs, and no hats at all. It's all according to fancy and fashion, and what takes.

"When we go to a cheap concert-room, such as the Albion, Ratchiffe-highway, or the Ship and Camel, Bermondsey, our usual business is to open with a chorus, such as 'Happy are we,' though, perhaps, we haven't had a bit of grub all day, and been as wretched as possible; and then we do a song or two, and then 'crack a wid,' as we say, that is, tell an anecdote, such as this:—

"Three old niggers went to sea on a paving-stone. The first never had any legs, the next never had any arms, and the other was strip stark naked. So the one without any legs said, 'I see de bird; so the one without any arms took up a gun and shot it, and the one without any legs run after it, and the one that was strip stark naked put it in his pocket. Now, you tell me what pocket that was?'

"Then another says, 'In his wainscoat pocket.' Then I return, 'How can he if he was naked? Can you give the inflammation of that story? Do you give it up?' Then he says, 'No, won't give it up.' Then I say, 'Would you give it up if you had it.' Then he says, 'Yes!' and I reply, 'The inflammation of that is the biggest lie that ebber was told.'

"Sometimes we do conundrums between the songs. I ask, 'Can you tell me how to spell blind pig in two letters?' and then he, remembering the first story, answers, 'Yes, the biggest lie that ebber was told.' 'No, that's not it.' Then I continue, 'P, g; and if you leave the i out it must be a blind pig, Jim.'

"Then we go on with the concert, and sing perhaps, 'Going ober de Mountain' and 'Mary Blane,' and then I ask such conundrums as these:

"'Why is mahogany like flannel?' 'Because they are both used to manufacture into

drawers;' and then we do this rhyme, 'Because mahogany makes drawers to put your clothes in, and flannel makes drawers to put your toes in.'

"Perhaps we do another conundrum, such as this:—'Supposing you nigger was dead, what would be the best time to bury you?' One says, 'I shan't suppose.' Another says, 'I don't know.' And then I say, 'Why, the latter end of the summer;' and one asks, 'Why, Jim?' 'Because it's the best time for black-berrying.' Then I cry out, 'Now, you niggers, go on with the consort;' and one of them will add, 'Now, Jim, we'll have that lemon-choly song of Dinah Clare, that poor girl that fell in the water-butt and got burnt to death.'

"Another of our dialogues is this one:—'Did I ebber tell you about that lemoncholy occurrence, Mary Blane, the young girl that died last night in the house that was burned down this morning, and she's gone to live in a garret?' 'I shall call and see her.' 'You can't.' 'Cos why?' 'Cos she moved from where she lives now; she's gone to live where she used to come from.' 'Did you ever see her broder Bill?' 'No; he's dead.' 'What! broder Bill dead, too?' 'Yes; I seed him this morning, and axed him how he was.' 'Well, and what did he told you?' 'He told me he was very well, thankye, and he was going to lib along with Dinah; and he'd only been married three weeks. So I asked him how many children he'd got. He said he'd only got one. So I said, 'Dere something very dark about that, and I don't think all goes right, if you was to have a son in three weeks.' So he said, 'Look you here, sir; if the world was made in six days, it's debblish hard if we can't make a son in three weeks.' 'Go on with the consort.'

"Another of our dialogues is this:—'Did I ever tell you, Jim, about my going out a-riding?' 'Neber.' 'Well, then, I'll told you, I had two dollars in my pocket.' 'Had you?' 'And I thought I'd do it gentleman-tell-like.' 'Yes.' 'So I went to the libery dealer.' 'Who?' 'The libery dealer—the man that keeps the horses' stable.' 'Oh! golly! you mean the stable-man.' 'Yes. Well, I axed him if he could lend me a horse to ride on; so he said, he'd only got one horse.' 'Wall?' 'And that was a grey mare. I thought that would do just as well. 'Of course.' 'And I axed him what that would cost me? and he said he should charge me two dollars for that—so I paid the two dollars.' 'Wall?' 'And he put me the spurs on my boots, and he put de bridle on the horse's back.' 'The bridle on the horse's back!—what did he do with the bit?' 'He neber had a bit at all; he put the stirrups in the mouth.' 'Now stop—you mean, he put the saddle on the back, and the bridle in the mouth.' 'I know it was something. Den they put me on the saddle, and my feet

on the bridle.' 'You mean he put your foot in the stirrups.' 'So I went out very well.'

So the mare begun for to gallop, so I caught hold of the turnel of the saddle.' 'The tummel!' 'Yes, Jim, the tummel.' 'No, no; you means the pummel.' 'Wall, hab it the pummel—you knows—but, but, I know, I'm right. So I caught hold of the mane, and I got on berry well till I come to a hill, when the mare began to gollop hard down the hill, because she was shy.' 'What was she shy at?' 'She saw a new-found-out-land dog crossing the wood.' 'A new-found-out-land dog crossing the road!' 'Yes; so I thought I'd try and stop her: so I stuck my knees into her side, and my spur into her, and by golly, she went too fast.' 'And did she now?' 'Till she falled down and broke her knees.' 'Poor thing!' 'Aye, and pitched poor nigger on his head; so I got up and tought I'd take the debil of a mare back to the stable. So when I got back I told the libery man about it.' 'Yas, the stable-man.' 'And he said I must pay 2*l.* 10s.' 'What for?' 'For repairing the mare; so I said I wouldn't; so he said he would take me before the court, and I said he might take me down the alley, if he liked; so I thought I had better go and insult a man ob de law about it. So I went to the man ob the law's house and pulled at the servant, and out comed the bell.' 'No; you means pulled the bell, and out comed the servant. Wall?' 'I said, Can you conform me is de man ob de law at home?' so she told me he was out, but the man ob de law's wife was at home, so down she come. So I said I wanted to insult the man ob de law, and she said, Insult me; I do just as well.' So she says, 'Plane yourself.' So I said, 'Well, den, supposing you was a gray mare, and I hired you for two dollars to ride you, and you was rader rusty, and went too fast for me, and I wanted to stop you, and I stuck my knees in your side, and my spur into you, and you falled down and broke your knees, how could I help it?' So she flung the door in my face and went in. So now go on with the consort.'

"Sometimes, when we are engaged for it, we go to concert-rooms and do the nigger-statues, which is the same as the tableaux vivants. We illustrate the adventures of Pompey, or the life of a negro slave. The first position is when he is in the sugar-brake, cutting the sugar cane. Then he is supposed to take it to be weighed, and not being weight, he is ordered to be flogged. My mate is then doing the orator and explaining the story. It's as nice a bit of business as ever was done, and goes out-and-out. You see, it's a new thing from the white ones. The next position is when he is being flogged, and then when he swears revenge upon the overseer, and afterwards when he murders the overseer. Then there's the flight of Pompey, and so on, and I conclude with a variety of sculptures

from the statues, such as the Archilles in Hyde-park, and so on. This is really good, and the finest bit of business out, and nobody does it but me; indeed it says in the bill—if you saw it—for which he stands unrivalled.'

"We sometimes have a greenhorn wants to go out pitching with us—a 'mug,' we calls them; and there's a chap of the name of 'Sparrow-back,' as we called him, because he always wore a bob-tailed coat, and was a rare swell; and he wished to go out with us, and we told him he must have his head shaved first, and Tom held him down while I shaved him, and I took every bit of hair off him. Then he underwent the operation of mugging him up with oil-colour paint, black, and not forgetting the lips, red. Ah, he carried the black marks on him for two months afterwards, and made a real washable nigger. We took him with us to Camberwell fair, and on the way he kept turning round and saying how strong he smelt of turps, and his face was stiff. Ah, he was a serenader! How we did scrub it into him with a stiff brush! When we washed at a horse-trough, coming home, he couldn't get a bit of the colour off. It all dried round his nose and eyes.

"When we are out pitching, the finest place for us is where there is anybody sick. If we can see some straw on the ground, or any tan, then we stays. We are sure to play up where the blinds are down. When we have struck up, we rattle away at the banjos, and down will come the servant, saying, 'You're to move on; we don't want you.' Then I'll pretend not to understand what she says, and I'll say, 'Mary Blane did you ask for? O yes, certainly, Miss;' and off we'll go into full chorus. We don't move for less than a bob, for sixpence ain't enough for a man that's ill. We generally get our two shillings.

"Sometimes gents will come and engage us to go and serenade people, such as at weddings or anything of that sort. Occasionally young gents or students will get us to go to a house late in the morning, to rouse up somebody for a lark, and we have to beat away and chop at the strings till all the windows are thrown up. We had a sovereign given us for doing that.

"The Christmas time is very good for us, for we go out as waits, only we don't black, but only sing; and that I believe—the singing, I mean—is, I believe, the original waits. With what we get for to play and to go away, and what we collect on boxing Monday, amounts to a tidy sum.

"There's very few schools of niggers going about London now. I don't think there are three schools pitching in the streets. There's the Westminster school—they have kettle-drums and music-stands, and never sings; and there's the New Kent-road gang, or Houghton's mob, and that's the best singing and playing school out; then a St. Giles's lot,

but they are dicky—not worth much. The Spitalfields school is broke up. Of course there are other niggers going about, but to the best of my calculation there ain't more than 40 men scattered about.

"Houghton's gang make the tour of the watering-places every year. I've been to Brighton with them, and we did pretty well there in the fine season, making sure of 30s. a-week a man; and it's work that continues all the year round, for when it's fine weather we do pitching, and when it's wet we divide a school into parties of two, and go busking at the public-houses."

The following comic dialogue was composed by the "professional" who was kind enough to favour me with his statement:—

"We are finishing a song, and after the song we generally do a sympathy, as we calls it (a symphony, you know); and when I've finished, Jim, my mate, keeps on beating the tambourine, as if he couldn't leave off. Then I turn round to him and say, 'By golly, if you don't leave off, I'll broke you over de jaw.' He answers, 'Go on, dig a hole and bury yourself.' Then I say, 'Why don't you 'splain yourself properly.' Then he keeps on playing still, and I say, 'Can't you leave off, nigger?' and he replies, 'I'm trying to broke my trowsers.' Then he leaves off, and I say, 'What de debil do you do dat for?' and he says, 'Because I belong to de boulding (building) society.' Then I puts another question, and then begins this dialogue:—

"He says, 'I'm going to sustire from dis profession.' 'What shall you do den?' 'I'm going to be a boulder.' 'Go along! what shall you build?' 'I'm going to be a boulder of trowsers.' 'By golly, you shall bould me a pair den.' 'Well, den, how would you like dem made? would you like dem with high-pointed collars, full bozomed, and nice wristbands?' 'What, de trowsems?' 'Made of lining nor calico?' 'What! lining or calico trowsems?' 'No! shirt!' 'Why, you neber said a word about shirt!' 'By golly, you did though.' 'Well, den, bould me a shirt.' 'Well, den, how would yer like it? will you like it with nice square toes, and bilingtary heels?' 'What! bilingtary heels shirts?' 'With a row of hobnails?' Then I turn round in a passion, and cry, 'By golly, I can't stand this! What! hobnails shirt?' 'No; I was talking about a pair of boots.' 'Now, you neber said a word about boots.' 'Oh yes, I did.' Then I get into a passion, and afterwards say, 'Well, bould me a pair of boots: now mind, you say a pair of boots.' 'Yes. Well, how would you like dem boulded? Newmarket cut, rolling collar, face of welwet?' Then I say, aside, 'What! rolling collar and faced with welwet boots?' and he continues, 'With pockets in de tail, and two row of gold buttons?' 'What! pockets in de tail, and two row of gold button boots? By golly, dat's a coat.' 'Yes; didn't

you say a coat?' 'Neber spoke a word about coat in all my life. Did I?' (that to the audience). 'Yes, ob course yer did.' Then I get into a passion again, but at last I say, 'Well, den, bould me a coat.' 'Well, how would yer like it? with a nice high crown?' Then I say, aside, 'What! a high-crowned coat?' 'With a nice cork body, patent Paris nap, and silk lining, with a return-up rim?' 'What! turn-up rim coat? Golly, dat's a hat!' 'Yas.' 'Neber spoke a work about a hat.' 'Oh, yer did now.' Then I get excited again; but at last say, 'Well, den, bould me a hat.' 'Well, den, how would you like it? Seben story high, with a nice green waterbutt behind, and de nice palings round the garden?' 'What! de palings round de garden of a hat?' 'No; I said de house.' 'By golly, you said hat!' 'No; I said de house.' 'By golly, you said hat!' Then we get into a terrific passion, and he gets up and hits my tambourine, and say, 'By golly, you said de house!' and I get up and hit him with the banjo on the head, and cry, 'By golly, you said a hat!' Then, in the height of my excitement, I turn to the people, and ask, 'Didn't he say a hat?' Of course they don't answer, and I conclude I must have made a mistake, so I reply, 'Well, den, bould me a house.' 'Well, den, how would you like it made? Of the best elm, with de inscription-plate on the lid, tree rows of nails, and handles at each side?' 'Well, by golly, dat's a coffin!' 'Yas, Jim.' 'What do yer tink I wants a coffin for?' 'Why, because you gets in such a passion, I thought you'd going to die.' Then I get sulky, and growl out, 'Well, den, go on wid de consort.'"

STREET GLEE-SINGERS.

AN experienced street vocalist of the better kind, upon whose statements I satisfied myself that every reliance might be placed, described to me the present condition of his calling. He was accompanied by his wife.

"I have been in the profession of a vocalist," he said, "for twenty-five years. Before that I was a concert-singer. I was not brought up to the profession; I was a shipping agent, but I married a concert-singer, and then followed the profession. I was young, and a little stage-struck;"—"Rather," said his wife, smiling, "he was struck with those who were on the stage"—and so I abandoned the ship-agency. I have tried my fortune on the stage as a singer, and can't say but what I have succeeded. In fact, my wife and I have taken more than any two singers that have ever appeared in the humble way. We have been street vocalists for twenty-five years. We sing solos, duets, and glees, and only at night. When we started, the class of songs was very different to what it is now. We were styled 'the Royal Glee-singers.' 'Cherry ripe,' 'Meet me by moonlight,' 'Sweet home,' were popular then. Haynes Bailey's ballads were popular,

and much of Bishop's music; as, indeed, it is still. Barnett's or Lee's music, however, is now more approved in the concert-rooms than Bishop's. Our plan was, and is, to inquire at gentlemen's houses if they wish to hear glee or solo singing, and to sing in the street or in the halls, as well as at parties. When we first commenced we have made 3*l.* and 3*l.* 10*s.* in a night this way; but that was on extraordinary occasions; and 3*l.* a-week might be the average earnings, take the year through. These earnings continued eight or ten years, and then fell off. Other amusements attracted attention. Now, my wife, my daughter, and I may make 25*s.* a-week by open-air singing. Concert-singing is extra, and the best payment is a crown per head a night for low-priced concerts. The inferior vocalists get 4*s.*, 3*s.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, and some as low as 2*s.* Very many who sing at concerts have received a high musical education; but the profession is so overstocked, that excellent singers are compelled to take poor engagements." The better sort of cheap concert-singers, the man and wife both agreed in stating, were a well-conducted body of people, often struggling for a very poor maintenance, the women rarely being improper characters. "But now," said the husband, "John Bull's taste is inclined to the brutal and filthy. Some of the 'character songs,' such as 'Sam Hall,' 'Jack Sheppard,' and others, are so indelicate that a respectable man ought not to take his wife and daughters to see them. The men who sing character songs are the worst class of singers, both as regards character and skill; they are generally loose fellows; some are what is called 'fancy men,' persons supported wholly or partly by women of the town. I attempted once to give concerts without these low-character singings; but it did not succeed, for I was alone in the attempt. I believe there are not more than half-a-dozen street vocalists of the same class as ourselves. They are respectable persons; and certainly open-air singing, as we practise it, is more respectable than popular concert-singing as now carried on. No one would be allowed to sing such songs in the streets. The 'character' concerts are attended generally by mechanics and their families; there are more males than females among the audiences."

STREET BALLAD-SINGERS, OR CHAUNTERS.

THE street classes that are still undescribed are the lower class of street singers, the Street Artists, the Writers without Hands, and the Street Exhibition-keepers. I shall begin with the Street Singers.

Concerning the ordinary street ballad-singers, I received the following account from one of the class:—

"I am what may be termed a regular street ballad-singer—either sentimental or comic, sir, for I can take both branches. I have

been, as near as I can guess, about five-and-twenty years at the business. My mother died when I was thirteen years old, and in consequence of a step-mother home became too hot to hold me, and I turned into the streets in consequence of the harsh treatment I met with. My father had given me no education, and all I know now I have picked up in the streets. Well, at thirteen years, I turned into the streets, houseless, friendless. My father was a picture-frame gilder. I was never taught any business by him—neither his own nor any other. I never received any benefit from him that I know. Well then, sir, there was I, a boy of thirteen, friendless, houseless, untaught, and without any means of getting a living—loose in the streets of London. At first I slept anywhere: sometimes I passed the night in the old Covent-garden-market; at others, in shutter-boxes; and at others, on door-steps near my father's house. I lived at this time upon the refuse that I picked up in the streets—cabbage-stumps out of the market, orange-peel, and the like. Well, sir, I was green then, and one of the Stamp-office spies got me to sell some of the *Poor Man's Guardians*, (an unstamped paper of that time), so that his fellow-spy might take me up. This he did, and I had a month at Coldbath-fields for the business. After I had been in prison, I got in a measure hardened to the frowns of the world, and didn't care what company I kept, or what I did for a living. I wouldn't have you to fancy, though, that I did anything dishonest. I mean, I wasn't particular as to what I turned my hand to for a living, or where I lodged. I went to live in Church-lane, St. Giles's, at a threepenny house; and having a tidy voice of my own, I was there taught to go out ballad-singing, and I have stuck to the business ever since. I was going on for fifteen when I first took to it. The first thing I did was to lead at glee-singing; I took the air, and two others, old hands, did the second and the bass. We used to sing the 'Red Cross Knight,' 'Hail, smiling Morn,' and harmonize 'The Wolf,' and other popular songs. Excepting when we needed money, we rarely went out till the evening. Then our pitches were in quiet streets or squares, where we saw, by the light at the windows, that some party was going on. Wedding-parties was very good, in general quite a harvest. Public-houses we did little at, and then it was always with the parlour company; the tap-room people have no taste for glee-singing. At times we took from 9*s.* to 10*s.* of an evening, the three of us. I am speaking of the business as it was about two or three-and-twenty years ago. Now, glee-singing is seldom practised in the streets of London: it is chiefly confined to the provinces, at present. In London, concerts are so cheap now-a-days, that no one will stop to listen to the street glee-singers; so most of the 'schools,' or sets, have gone to sing at the cheap concerts held at the public-houses. Many of the glee-

singers have given up the business, and taken to the street Ethiopians instead. The street glee-singers had been some of them brought up to a trade, though some had not. Few were so unfortunate as me—to have none at all. The two that I was with had been a ladies' shoemaker and a paper-hanger. Others that I knew had been blacksmiths, carpenters, linendrapers' shopmen, bakers, French-polishers, pastrycooks, and such-like. They mostly left their business and took to glee-singing when they were young. The most that I knew were from nineteen to twenty-two years old; that had in general been a little racketsy, and had got stage-struck or concert-struck at public-houses: they had got praised for their voices, and so their vanity led them to take to it for a living, when they got hard up. Twenty years ago there must have been at the east and west ends at least fourteen different sets, good and bad; and in each set there was, on an average, three singers: now I don't think there is one set at work in London streets. After I had been three years glee-singing in the streets, I took up with the ballad business, and found it more lucrative than the glee line. Sometimes I could take 5s. in the day, and not work heavily for it either; but at other times I couldn't take enough to pay my lodging. When any popular song came up, that was our harvest. 'Alice Gray,' 'The Sea,' 'Bridal Ring,' 'We met,' 'The Tartar Drum,' (in which I was well known,) 'The Banks of the Blue Moselle,' and such-like, not forgetting 'The Mistletoe Bough'; these were all great things to the ballad-singers. We looked at the bill of fare for the different concert-rooms, and then went round the neighbourhood where these songs were being sung, because the airs being well known, you see it eased the way for us. The very best sentimental song that ever I had in my life, and which lasted me off and on for two years, was Byron's 'Isle of Beauty.' I could get a meal quicker with that than with any other. 'The Mistletoe Bough' got me many a Christmas dinner. We always works at that time. It would puzzle any man, even the most exactest, to tell what they could make by ballad-singing in the street. Some nights it would be wet, and I should be hoarse, and then I'd take nothing. I should think that, take one week with another, my earnings were barely more than 10s. a-week: 12s. a-week on the average, I should think, would be the very outside. Street ballad-singers never go out in costume. It is generally supposed that some who appear without shoes and wretchedly clad are made up for the purpose of exciting charity; but this the regular street ballad-singer never does.

He is too independent to rank himself with the beggars. He earns his money, he fancies, and does not ask charity. Some of the ballad-singers may perhaps be called beggars, or rather pensioners—that is the term we give them; but these are of the worst de-

scription of singers, and have money given to them neither for their singing nor songs, but in pity for their age and infirmities. Of these there are about six in London. Of the regular ballad-singers, sentimental and comic, there are not less than 250 in and about London. Occasionally the number is greatly increased by an influx from the country. I should say that throughout England, Wales, and Scotland, there is not less than 700 who live solely by ballad-singing, and selling ballads and song-books. In London the ballad-singers generally work in couples—especially the comic singers. The sentimental generally go alone; but there are very few in London who are merely sentimental ballad-singers—not more than a dozen at the very outside. The rest sing whatever comes up. The tunes are mostly picked up from the street bands, and sometimes from the cheap concerts, or from the gallery of the theatre, where the street ballad-singers very often go, for the express purpose of learning the airs. They are mostly utterly ignorant of music, and some of them get their money by the noise they make, by being paid to move on. There is a house in the Blackfriars-road where the people has been ill for the last 16 years, and where the street ballad-singer always goes, because he is sure of getting 2d. there to move on. Some, too, make a point of beginning their songs outside of those houses where the straw is laid down in front; where the knockers are done up in an old glove the ballad-singer is sure to strike up. The comic songs that are popular in the street are never indecent, but are very often political. They are generally sung by two persons, one repeating the two first lines of the verse, and the other the two last. The street-ballads are printed and published chiefly in the Seven Dials. There are four ballad-publishers in that quarter, and three at the East-end. Many ballads are written expressly for the Seven-Dials press, especially the Newgate and the political ones, as well as those upon any topic of the day. There are five known authors for the Dials press, and they are all street ballad-singers. I am one of these myself. The little knowledge I have I picked up bit by bit, so that I hardly know how I have come by it. I certainly knew my letters before I left home, and I have got the rest off the dead walls and out of the ballads and papers I have been selling. I write most of the Newgate ballads now for the printers in the Dials, and, indeed, anything that turns up. I get a shilling for a 'copy of verses written by the wretched culprit the night previous to his execution.' I wrote Courvoisier's sorrowful lamentation. I called it, 'A Voice from the Gaol.' I wrote a pathetic ballad on the respite of Annette Meyers. I did the helegy, too, on Rush's execution. It was supposed, like the rest, to be written by the culprit himself, and was

particular penitent. I didn't write that to order—I knew they would want a copy of verses from the culprit. The publisher read it over, and said, 'That's the thing for the street public.' I only got a shilling for Rush. Indeed, they are all the same price, no matter how popular they may be. I wrote the life of Manning in verse. Besides these, I have written the lament of Calcraft the hangman on the decline of his trade, and many political songs. But song and Newgate ballad-writing for the Dials is very poor work. I've got five times as much for writing a squib for a rag-shop as for a ballad that has taken me double the time."

THE WHISTLING MAN.

It sometimes happens that a lad or a man, before being thrown for a living on the streets, has often sung a song to amuse his companions, or that he has been reckoned "a good whistler," so he resolves to start out and see if he cannot turn to pecuniary profits that which until now he had only regarded in the light of an amusement.

The young man from whom I elicited the annexed statement was one of this class. His appearance was rather ungainly, and when he walked across the room he moved in so slovenly a manner that one leg appeared to drag itself after the other with the greatest reluctance.

When telling me that he had never been guilty of stealing, nor imprisoned, all his life, he did so in such a manner, and with such a tone of voice, as left little doubt on my mind that he had been kept honest more by the fear of the gaol than by his own moral principle.

His face was long and thin, and his cheeks so hollowed by long whistling, that they appeared almost to have had a round piece of flesh scooped out of the centre of each of them. His large thick lips were generally kept half-an-inch apart, so that they gave the man a half-idiotic look; and when he rounded them for whistling, they reminded me somewhat of a lamb's kidney.

"I am a whistler—that is, I whistle merely with my lips, without the aid of anything besides. I have been at it about seven years. I am twenty next birthday. My father was, and is, a coach-painter. He is, I think, at the present time, working in Great Queen-street, Lincoln's-inn-fields. I had three sisters and one brother. I was the youngest but two. When I got to be about seven years old my mother died, and then I used to get into the streets and stop out all day playing with other boys, most of them older than myself; and they often persuaded me to 'hop the wag,' that is, play truant from school, and spend the money which my father gave me to take to the master. Sometimes they took me to Covent-garden or Farringdon Market, where

they used to prig a lot of apples and pears, not with the idea of selling them, but to eat. They used to want me to do the same, but I never would nor never did, or else I dare say I should have been better off, for they say 'the biggest rogues get on best.' I was always afraid of being sent to prison, a place I was never in in all my life. At last I was persuaded by two young companions to stop out all night, so we all three went to Mrs. Reding's, Church-lane, and had a fourpenny lodging a-piece. My pals paid for me, because I'd got no money. I left them the next morning, but was afraid to go home; I had got nothing to eat, so I thought I'd see if I could get a few ha'pence by singing a song. I knew two or three, and began with the 'Mariner's Grave,' and then 'Lucy Neal.' I walked about all day, singing nearly the whole of the time, but didn't get a penny till about six o'clock. By nine o'clock I mustered 10d., and then I left off, and went to a lodging-house in White-chapel, where I got something to eat, and paid my lodging for the night. It's a custom always to pay before-hand. The next morning I felt very down-hearted, and was half a mind to go home, but was afraid I should get a hiding. However, I at last plucked up my spirits, and went out again. I didn't get anything given me till about dinner-time, when a gentleman came up to me and asked me how so young a boy as me come to be in the streets? I told him I couldn't earn my living any other way. He asked my name, and where I lived. I gave him both a false name and address, for I was afraid lest he should go to my father. He said I had better go home with him, so he took me to his house in Grosvenor-square, which was a very fine un—for he was a very rich man, where he gave me plenty to eat, and made me wash myself, and put on a suit of his little boy's left-off clothes. I stayed here three months, being employed to clean knives and boots, and run of errands. He used to send me twice a-week to the Bank of England with a cheque, which he used to write upon and tear out of a book, and I used to bring back the money. They always tied it up safely for me in a bag, and I put it into my pocket, and never took my hand off it till I got safe back again. At the end of three months he called me one day, and told me he was going with his wife and family into the country, where, he was sorry to say, there'd be no room for me. He then gave me 3l., and told me to go and seek for my friends, and go and live with them if I could.

"I went home to my father, who was greatly pleased at seeing me again; and he asked what I had been doing all the time, and where I had got my clothes and money from. I told him all, and promised I would never run away again,—so he forgave me. However, for a long time he would not let me go out. At last, after a good deal of persuasion, he let me out to look after a place, and I soon

got one at Mr. Cooper's, Surgeon, in Seven Dials, where I had 4s. a week. I used to be there from seven o'clock in the morning till nine at night, but I went home to my meals. After I'd been at my place four months, I by accident set fire to some naphtha, which I was stirring up in the back-yard, and it burnt off all my eyelashes, and so I 'got the sack.' When he paid me my wages,—as I was afraid to tell my father what had happened,—I started off to my old quarters in Whitechapel. I stopped there all day on Sunday, and the next three days I wandered about seeking work, but couldn't get none. I then give it up as a bad job, and picked up with a man named Jack Williams, who had no legs. He was an old sailor, who had got frost-bitten in the Arctic regions. I used to lead him about with a big painted board afore him. It was a picture of the place where he was froze in. We used to go all about Ratchiffe Highway, and sometimes work up as far as Notting Hill. On the average, we got from 8s. to 10s. a-day. My share was about a third. I was with him for fifteen months, till one night I said something to him when he was a-bed that didn't please him, and he got his knife out and stabbed my leg in two places,—here are the marks. I bled a good deal. The other lodgers didn't like to hit him for it, on account of his having no legs, but they kicked him out of the house, and would not let him back any more. They all wanted me to lock him up, but I wouldn't, as he was an old pal. Two or three silk handkerchiefs was tied round my leg, and the next day I was took to St. Thomas's Hospital, where I remained for about nine days. When I left the head-nurse gave me ten shillings on account of being so destitute—for I was without a ha'penny to call my own. As soon as I got out of the hospital I went down to Billingsgate, and bought some bread and pickled whelks at a stall, but when I pulled out my money to pay for 'em some costermongering chaps knocked me down, and robbed me of 5s. I was completely stunned by the blow. The police came up to see what was the matter, and took me to the station-house, where I stopped till the next morning, when the inspector made me tell where my father lived, and I was taken home to him. For about a month my father kept me under lock and key, and after I had been with him about three months more I 'stept it' again, and as I could always whistle very well, I thought I'd try it for a living; so I made a 'pitch' in New-street, Covent Garden, and began by whistling 'Will you love me then as now?' but there wasn't many in the world as loved me. I did very well though that day, for I got about 3s. 6d. or 4s., so I thought I'd practise it and stick to it. I worked all about town till I got well known. I used, sometimes, to go into public-houses and whistle upon a piece of 'bacco pipe, blowing into the bowl, and moving my fingers as if I was playing a

flute, and nobody could tell the difference if they had not seen me. Sometimes I used to be asked to stand outside hotels, taverns, and even club-houses, and give 'em a tune: I often had sixpences, shillings, and half-crowns thrown me. I only wish I had sich luck now, for the world's topsy-turvy, and I can't get hardly anything. I used then to earn 3s. or 4s. a-day, and now it don't amount to more than 1s. 6d.

"After I'd worked London pretty well, I sometimes would start off a few miles out to the towns and villages; but, generally, it wasn't much account. The country chaps like sich tunes as 'The Barley Stack,' or 'The Little House under the Hill.' I often used to whistle to them while they danced. They liked jigs mostly, and always paid me a penny a dance each.

"I recollect once when I was whistling before a gentleman's house down at Hounslow, he sent his servant and called me in. I was taken into a fine large room, full of looking-glasses, and time-pieces, and pictures. I was never in sich a room before, all my life. The gentleman was there with his family,—about six on 'em,—and he told me if I'd whistle, and learn his birds to sing, he'd give me a sovereign. He had three fine brass-wire cages, with a bird in each, slung all of a row from the ceiling. I set to work 'like a brick,' and the birds begun to sing directly, and I amused 'em very much. I stopped about an hour and a half, and let 'em have all sorts of tunes, and then he gave me a sovereign, and told me to call again when I come that way; but before I left he said the servants was to give me something to eat and drink, so I had dinner in the kitchen with the servants, and a jolly good dinner it was.

"From Hounslow I walked to Maidenhead, and took a lodging for the night at the Turk's Head. In the evening some countrymen come into the tap-room and kicked up a row with the missus because she couldn't lodge 'em. She run in to turn them away, when three of 'em pitched into her right and left; and if it hadn't been for me and another chap she'd have got killed. When they got her down I jumped upon the table and snatched up the only weapon I could find, a brass candlestick, and knocked one of 'em down senseless, and the other fellow got hold of a broomstick and give it 'em as hard as he could, till we beat 'em right out of the place. There happened to be some police outside, drilling, who came over and took three of them to the stocks, where they was locked in for twenty-four hours. The next day the magistrate sentenced 'em to three months' imprisonment each, and I started for London and never whistled a tune till I reached it, which was three days afterwards. I kept on at the old game, earning about 2s. 6d. a-day, till the militia was being called out, and then I joined them, for I thought it would be the best thing I could do. I was sworn in by Colonel Scrivens at Eton

Mews. We was taken into a stable, where there was three horses. Four of us laid hold of a book altogether; and then, after asking us if we had any complaints, or were lame, or any way unfit for service, or was married, or had any children; and when we had said No, he asked us if we was free, able, and willing to serve in her Majesty's militia, in either England, Ireland, Scotland, or Wales, for the term of five years, if so long her Majesty required our services; and when we said we was, we took the oath and kissed the book.

"The same day, which was the 11th of June, 1854, we was packed off from the Waterloo Station for Portsmouth. After being drilled for three weeks I was returned for duty, and went on guard. The first guard I mounted was at Detached Dock at Portsmouth—it's where the convicts are. I didn't do any whistling there, I can tell yer; I'd different sorts of work, for part of our duty was to bury the poor fellows that died after coming home invalided from the Crimea. The people through that used to call us the 'garrison undertakers.' I was there thirteen months, and never, the whole time, had more than two nights' bed a-week; and some part of the time the weather was very frosty, and we was often over our ankles in snow. I belonged to the 4th Middlesex, and no corps ever did so much duty, or went through so much hardships, as ours. From Portsmouth I was ordered, with my regiment, 950 strong, to Buttervant, county Cork, Ireland. When we reached the Irish Channel a storm arose, and we was all fastened under hatches, and not suffered to come upon deck for four days, by which time we reached the Cove of Cork: the Colonel's horse had to be thrown overboard, and they, more than once, had serious thoughts of throwing all the luggage into the sea as well. I was ten months in Ireland. I didn't do any whistling there; and then the regiment was ordered home again on account of the peace. But before we left we had a day's sport, consisting of greasy-pole climbing, jumping in sacks, racing after a pig with a greasy tail, and all them sort of things; and at night the officers had a grand ball. We landed at Portsmouth on a Monday morning at four o'clock, and marched through to the station, and reached Hounslow about four o'clock the same afternoon. A month after we were disembodied, and I came at once to London. I had about 17. 5s. in my pocket, and I resolved in my own mind never to go whistling any more. I went to my father, but he refused to help me in any way. I tried for work, but couldn't get any, for the people said, they didn't like a militia man; so, after having spent all my money, I found that I must either starve or whistle, and so, you see, I'm once more on the streets.

"While I was in Ireland I absented myself from the barracks for twenty-one days,

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but fearing that a picket would get hold of me, I walked in one morning at six o'clock. I was instantly placed under arrest in the guard-room, where I remained four days, when I was taken before the Colonel, and to my great surprise I saw, sitting aside of him, the very gentleman who had given me the pound to whistle to his birds; his name was Colonel Bagot, as I found out afterwards, and he was deputy-magistrate for Middlesex. He asked me if I was not the chap as had been to his house; I told him I was, so he got me off with a good reprimand, and saved me being tried by a court-martial. When I first took to sleeping at lodging-houses they was very different to what they are now. I've seen as many as eighteen people in one cellar sleeping upon loose straw, covered with sheets or blankets, and as many as three in one bed; but now they won't take in any little boys like as I was, unless they are with their parents; and there's very few beds in a room, and never more than one in a bed. Married people have a place always parted off for themselves. The inspector comes in all times—often in the middle of the night—to see that the regulations ain't broken.

"I used, one time, to meet another man whistling, but like old Dick, who was the first at the profession, he's gone dead, and so I'm the only one at it now anywhere. It's very tiring work, and makes you precious hungry when you keep at it for two or three hours; and I only wish I could get something else to do, and you'd see how soon I'd drop it.

"The tunes that are liked best in the streets is sich as 'Ben Bolt' and 'Will you love me then as now?' but a year or two ago, nothin' went down like the 'Low-back Car.' I was always being asked for it. I soon gets hold of the new tunes that comes up. I don't think whistling hurts me, because I don't blow so hard as 'old Dick' used. A gentleman come up to me once in the street that was a doctor, and asked me whether I drunk much, and whether I drew my breath in or blowed it out. I told him I couldn't get much to drink, and he said I ought at least to have three half-pints of beer a-day, or else I should go into a consumption; and when I said I mostly blowed out when I whistled, he said that was the best, because it didn't strain the lungs so much."

WHISTLING AND DANCING BOY.

At the present time there is only one English boy going about the streets of London dancing, and at the same time playing his own musical accompaniment on a tin whistle. There are two or three Italian boys who dance whilst they perform on either the flute or the hurdy-gurdy, but the lad who gave me the following statement assured me that he was the only Englishman who had made street whistling and dancing "his profession."

P

He was a red-headed lad, of that peculiar white complexion which accompanies hair of that colour. His forehead was covered with freckles, so thick, that they looked as if a quantity of cayenne pepper had been sprinkled over it; and when he frowned, his hair moved backwards and forwards like the twitching of a horse shaking off flies.

"I've put some ile on my hair, to make me look tidy," he said. The grease had turned his locks to a fiery crimson colour, and as he passed his hands through it, and tossed it backwards, it positively glittered with the fat upon it.

The lad soon grew communicative enough, and proceeded to show me a blue jacket which he had bought that morning for a shilling, and explained to me at the same time how artful he had been over the bargain, for the boy had asked eightpence.

I remarked that his shoes seemed in a bad state, for they were really as white as a baker's slippers from want of blacking, and the toe of one gaped like the opening to a tortoise-shell. He explained to me that he wore all his boots out dancing, doing the double shuffle.

"Now these 'ere shoes," he said, "cost me a shilling in Petticoat-lane not a week since, and looked as good as new then, and even now, with a little mending, they'll make a tidy pair of crab-shells again."

To give force to this remark, he lifted his leg up, but, despite his explanation, I could not see how the leather could possibly be repaired.

He went through his dances for me, at the same time accompanying himself on his penny whistle. He took his shoes off and did a hornpipe, thumping his feet upon the floor the while, like palms on a panel, so that I felt nervous lest there should be a pin in the carpet and he be lamed by it.

The boy seemed to have no notion of his age, for although he accounted for twenty-two years of existence, yet he insisted he was only seventeen "come two months." I was sorry to find, moreover, that he was in the habit of drinking, seldom going home after his night's work without being intoxicated; and, indeed, his thin body and pinched face bore evidence of his excess in this respect, though, but for his assertion that "he was never hungry, and food was no good to him," I should have imagined, at the first glance, that he was pining with want.

He seems to be among the more fortunate of those who earn their living in the streets, for although I questioned and cross-questioned him in every possible way, he still clung to his assertion that he made 2*l.* per week. His clothes, however, bore no evidence of his prosperity, for his outer garment was a washed-out linen blouse, such as glaziers wear, whilst his trousers were of coarse canvas, and as black on the thighs as the centre of a drum-head.

He brought with him a penny whistle to show me his musical talents, and, certainly, his execution of the tin instrument was rapid and certain.

The following is the statement he gave me:—

"WHISTLING BILLY.

That's my name, and I'm known all round about in the Borough as 'Whistling Billy,' though some, to be sure, calls me 'Whistling Bill,' but in general I'm 'Billy.' I'm not looking very respectable now, but you should see me when I'm going to the play; I looks so uncommon respectable, nobody knows me again. I shall go to the theatre next week, and I should just like you to see me. It's surprising.

"I ain't a very fat chap, am I? but I'm just meaty enough for my perfession, which is whistling and dancing in public-houses, where I gives 'em the hornpipe and the bandy jig, that's dancing with my toes turned in.

"My father was a barber. He only charged a penny for shaving, but he wouldn't cut your hair under twopence, and he used to do well—very well sometimes; I don't know whether he's alive now, for I ain't seen him these ten years, nor asked him for a halfpenny. Mother was alive when I left, and so was my two brothers. I don't know whether they're alive now. No, I don't want to go and see him, fer I can get my own living. He used to keep a shop near Fitzroy-square.

"I was always fond of dancing, and I runned away from home for to follow it. I don't know my own age exactly: I was as tall then as I am now. I was twelve when I left home, and it must be ten years ago, but I ain't twenty-two: oh, dear no! Why, I ain't got no whiskers nor things. I drink such a lot of beer and stuff, that I can't grow no taller; gentlemen at the public-houses gives it me. Why, this morning I was near tipsy, dancing to some coalheavers, who gave me drink.

"I used, when I was at father's, to go to a ball, and that's where I learned to dance. It was a shilling ball in the New-road, where there was ladies, regular nice ones, beautifully dressed. They used to see me dancing, and say, when I growed up I should make a beautiful dancer; and so I do, for I'd dance against anybody, and play the whistle all the time. The ladies at these balls would give me money then for dancing before them. Ah! I'd get my entrance shilling back, and four or five into the bargain. I'd generally take it home to mother, after buying a little sweet-stuff, or such-like, and I think that's why mother would let me go, 'cos I picked up a good bit of money.

"It was another boy that put me up to running away from home. He axed me to go along with him, and I went. I dare say I troubled father a bit when he found I'd gone. I ain't troubled him for ten years now. If I

was to go back to him, he'd only send me to work, and I make a better living by myself. I don't like work, and, to tell you the truth, I never did work, for it's like amusement to me to dance; and it must be an amusement, 'cos it amuses the people, and that's why I gets on so well.

"When I hooked it with that chap, we went to Croydon, in Surrey. We went to a lodging-house where there was men and women, and boys and chaps, and all like that; we all slept in one room. I had no money with me, only my clothes; there was a very nice velvet cap; and I looked very different then to what I do now. This young chap had some tin, and he kept me. I don't know how he earned his tin, for he'd only go out at night time, and then he'd come home and bring in money, and meat and bread, and such-like. He said to me, before I went pals with him, that he'd keep me, and that he'd make plenty of money. He told me he wanted a chum to mate with, so I went with him right off. I can't say what he was. He was about thirteen or fourteen, and I never seed him do no work. He might have been a prig for all I knows.

"After I'd been in the lodging-house, this chap bought a stock of combs and cheap jewels, and then we went out together, and he'd knock at the houses and offer the things for sale, and I'd stand by. There's a lot of gentlemen's houses, if you recollect, sir, round Croydon, on the London road. Sometimes the servants would give us grub instead of money. We had plenty to eat. Now you comes to speak of it, I do remember he used to bring back some old silver with him, such as old table-spoons or ladles, broke up into bits, and he'd make a deal selling them. I think he must have been a prig. At night we used to go to the public-houses and dance. He never danced, but sit down and looked on. He said he was my relation, and I always shared my drink with him, and the people would say, 'Feed me, feed my dog,' seeing me going halves with him.

"I kept along with him for three years, he working in the day, and I at night, dancing. We parted at Plymouth, and I took up with another mate, and worked on to Exeter. I think my new mate was a regular prig, for it was through his putting me up to priggling that I got into trouble there. This chap put me on to taking a brass cock from a foundry. It was in a big wooden butt, with 150 gallons of water in it. I got over a gate and pulled it out, and set all the foundry afloat. We cut away, but two hours afterwards the policeman come to the lodging-house, and though there was a lot of boys and girls, he picked me out, and I had two months for it, and all my hair was cut off, and I only had dry bread and gruel every day, and soup twice a-week. I was jolly sorry for that cock business when I was caught, and I made up my mind never to take nothing more. It's going to the lodging-

houses puts fellows up to priggling. The chaps brings in legs of beef, and puddens, and clothes, and then they sells 'em cheap. You can sometimes buy a pair of breeches, worth ten shillings, for two bob, for the chaps don't like to take 'em to sell at the shops, and would sooner sell 'em for a'most nothing rather than be found out.

"When I came out of quod I had a shilling give me, and I went and bought a penny whistle. I was always fond of music and dancing, and I know'd a little of playing the whistle. Mother and father was both uncommon fond of dancing and music, and used to go out dancing and to concerts, near every night pretty well, after they'd locked the shop up. I made about eleven bob the first week I was out, for I was doing very well of a night, though I had no hair on my head. I didn't do no dancing, but I knew about six tunes, such as 'Rory O'More,' and 'The Girl I left behind me,' two hornpipes, (the Fishers' and the Sailors') 'St. Patrick's Day,' and 'The Shells of the Ocean,' a new song as had just come up. I can play fifty tunes now. Whistles weren't so common then, they weren't out a quarter so much as now. Swinden had the making of them then, but he weren't the first maker of them. Clarke is the largest manufactory of them now, and he followed Swinden. People was astonished at seeing a tune played on a tin whistle, and gave pretty liberal. I believe I was the first as ever got a living on a tin whistle. Now there's more. It was at that time as I took to selling whistles. I carried 'em on a tin tray before me, and a lid used to shut on it, fixed. I'd pitch before a hotel amongst the gentlemen, and I'd get 2*d.* a-piece for the whistles, and some would give me sixpence or a shilling, just according. The young gents was them as bought most, and then they'd begin playing on them, and afterwards give them to the young ladies passing. They was very pleased with me, for I was so little, and I done well. The first two months I made about 17*s.* or 18*s.* a-week, but after that they got rather dull, so I gived up selling of them and took to dancing. It didn't pay me so well as the whistles, for it was pretty near all profit on them—they only cost me 3*d.* a-dozen. I travelled all round Devonshire, and down to Land's End, in Cornwall—320 miles from London, and kept on playing the whistle on the road. I knew all about them parts. I generally pitched before the hotels and the spirit-shops, and began whistling and dancing; but sometimes I'd give the cottagers a turn, and they'd generally hand over a ha'penny a-piece and some bread.

"I stopped travelling about the south of England, and playing and dancing, for a little better than four years and a half. I didn't do so well in winter as in summer. Harvest time was my best time. I'd go to the fields where they was working, and play and dance. Sometimes the master would hollar out, 'Here, you get

out of this!' but the men would speak up for me and say, 'Let him stop, master.' Many a chap's got the sack through me, by leaving off his work and beginning to dance. Sometimes, when the last load of hay was going home (you see, that's always considered the jolliest part of the work), they'd make me get up to the top of the load, and then whistle to them. They was all merry—as merry as could be, and would follow after dancing about, men, women, and boys. I generally played at the harvest suppers, and the farmer himself would give me 4s. 6d. or 5s. the night, besides my quart of ale. Then I'd pick up my 6s. or 7s. in ha'pence among the men. I've had as many as two harvest suppers a week for three weeks or a month following, for I used to ax the people round what time they was going to have a supper, and where, and set off, walking nine or ten miles to reach the farm, and after that we find another spot.

"It's very jolly among farm people. They give you plenty of cider and ale. I've drunk the cider hot, whilst they was brewing it—new cider, you know. You never want food neither, for there's more than you can eat, generally bread and cheese, or maybe a little cold biled pork. At night, the men and women used to sleep in a kind of barn, among the clean straw; and after the beer-shops had closed—they are all little beer-shops, 3d. a quart in your own jugs, and like that—they'd say to me, 'Come up to the doss and give us a tune,' and they'd come outside and dance in the open air, for they wouldn't let them have no candles nor matches. Then they'd make themselves happy, and I'd play to 'em, and they'd club up and give me money, sometimes as much as 7s., but I've never had no higher than that, but never no less than 3s. One man used to take all the money for me, and I'd give him a pot o' ale in the morning. It was a penny a dance for each of 'em as danced, and each stand-up took a quarter of a hour, and there was generally two hours of it; that makes about seven dances, allowing for resting. I've had as many as forty dancing at a time, and sometimes there was only nine of 'em. I've seen all the men get up together and dance a hornpipe, and the women look on. They always did a hornpipe or a country dance. You see, some of 'em would sit down and drink during the dance, but it amounted to almost three dances each person, and generally there was about fifty present. Usually the men would pay for the women, but if they was hard up and been free with their money, the girls would pay for them. They was mostly Irish, and I had to do jigs for them, instead of a hornpipe. My country dance was to the tune 'Oh don't you tease me, pretty little dear.' Any fiddler knows that air. It's always played in the country for country dances. First they dances to each other, and then it's hands across, and then down the middle, and then it's back again and

turn. That's the country dance, sir. I used to be regular tired after two hours. They'd stick me up on a box, or a tub, or else they'd make a pile of straw, and stick me a-top of it; or if there was any carts standing by loaded with hay, and the horses out, I was told to mount that. There was very little drinking all this time, because the beer-shops was shut up. Perhaps there might be such a thing as a pint of beer between a man and his partner, which he'd brought in a can along with him. They only danced when it was moonlight. It never cost me nothing for lodgings all the harvest times, for they would make me stop in the barn along with them; and they was very good company, and took especial care of me. You mustn't think this dancing took place every night, but only three or four nights a-week. I find 'em out travelling along the road. Sometimes they've sent a man from one farm-house to bespeak me whilst I was playing at another. There was a man as played on the clarinet as used to be a favourite among haymakers, but they prefer the penny tin whistle, because it makes more noise, and is shriller, and is easier heard; besides, I'm very rapid with my fingers, and makes 'em keep on dancing till they are tired out. Please God, I'll be down among them again this summer. I goes down regular. Last year and the year before, and ever since I can recollect.

"When I'm in London I make a good living at dancing and playing, for I'm the only one that plays the whistle and dances at the same time. I'm reckoned the best hand at it of any man in town or country. I've often been backed by the company to dance and play against another man, and I generally win. I've been in hotels, and danced to gentlemen, and made plenty of money at it. I do all manner of tricks, just to make 'em laugh—capering, or 'hanky-panky,' as I term it. I once had half-a-sovereign given to me, but I think it was a mistake, for he says, 'Take that, and go on.' I went home to clean myself, and had my trousers washed, and my shoes blacked, and went half-price to the theatre—the 'Wid' I think it was—and paid my shilling, and went in as tidy as a gentleman.

"When I first go into a public-house I go into the tap-room, and say, 'Would you like to hear a tune, gentlemen, or see a dance, or a little bit of amusement?' If they say 'No,' I stand still, and begin a talking, to make 'em laugh. I'm not to be choked off easy. I say, 'Come, gentlemen, can't you help a poor fellow as is the best dancer in England? I must have some pudden for breakfast, because I ain't had nothing for three weeks.' Then some say, 'Well, I will see the best dancer in England; I've got a mag.' Then after dancing I go to the gentleman who has given me most, and ask him six or seven times 'to give me a copper,' declaring he's the only one as has given me nothing, and that makes the other

laugh. I also ask the landlord to give a half-pint of beer to grease my feet, and that makes 'em merry. I generally gets good nobblings (that's a collection, you know). They likes the dancing better than music; but it's doing them together that takes. I ax them if they'll have the hornpipe or the Irish jig, and if they says the jig I do it with my toes turned in, like as if I was bandy; and that's very popular. I have been to as many as forty public-houses in a evening, and dance inside; or if they won't let me come in, they'll say, 'Dance outside as much as you like,' and that's very near as good for me. If I gets inside, I'll mop up 1s. if it's good company, or perhaps 3d. or 4d., and always plenty to drink—more than I can take, for I'm generally drunk before I can get home. They never gives me nothing to eat, but it don't matter, for I'm seldom hungry; but 'I like a drop of good beer,' as the song says.

"I've been engaged at concert-rooms to dance. I have pumps put on, and light trousers, and a Guernsey, dressed up as a sailor. That was in the country, at Canterbury, and I had 7s. and plenty to eat and drink. I've never appeared at a London concert-room, though I've been axed to come in and amuse the company; but I wasn't tidy enough, and didn't like.

"When I dance in a public-house I take my shoes off and say, 'Now, gentlemen, watch my steps.' For the hornpipe I begin with walking round, or 'twisting' as the term is; then I stands up, and does a double-shuffle—or the 'straight fives' as we calls it; then I walk round again before doing the back-snatches, another kind of double-shuffle. Then I does the rocks of Scilly, that's when you twists your feet and bends sideways; next comes the double steps and rattles, that is, when the heels makes a rattle coming down; and I finishes with the square step. My next step is to walk round and collect the money. The Irish like to see me do the jig better than the hornpipe. Them two are the only dances I know.

"I make regular 2l. a-week. Yesterday I made 7s. 3d., and it was rainy, so I couldn't get out till late. At Brighton Regatta I and my mate made 5l. 10s. between us, and at Dover Regatta we made 8l. between us. We squandered 2l. 10s. at the lodging-house in one night, betting and tossing, and playing at cards. We always follows up the regatta. We made only 2l. 10s. at Hastings Regatta. You see we pick up on a Saturday night our 11s. a-piece, and on other days perhaps 5s. or 8s., according to the day.

"I used to go about with a mate who had a wooden leg. He was a beautiful dancer, for he made 'em all laugh. He's a little chap, and only does the hornpipe, and he's uncommon active, and knocks his leg against the railings, and makes the people grin. He was very successful at Brighton, because he was pitted.

"I've also been about with a school of tumblers. I used to do the dancing between the posturing and likes of that. I've learnt tumbling, and I was cricked for the purpose, to teach me. I couldn't walk for three days. They put my legs round my neck, and then couldn't get 'em back again. I was in that state, regular doubled up, for two hours, and thought I was done for. Some of my mates said, 'There, you've been and spoiled that chap.' It's dreadful painful learning tumbling. When I was out with the posturers I used to play the drum and mouth-pipes; I had a old hat and coat on. Then when my turn come, I'd appear in my professional costume, and a young chap who was a fluter—not a whistler, like me,—would give a tune, and I'd go on the carpet and give the Irish jig or the hornpipe.

"There was four of us in the school, and we'd share a pound a-week each. We were down at Dover there, and put up at the Jolly Sailors. I left them there, and went alone on to the camp where the German Legion was—at Shorncliffe, that's the place. I stopped there for three weeks, and did very well, taking my 7s. or 8s. a-day.

"After that I got tired of dancing, and thought I'd like a change, so I went out on a fishing-boat. They didn't give me nothing a-week, only 4s. when we come home after two months, and your clothes, and victuals a-board. We first went fishing for plaice, and soles, and turbot, and we'd land them at Yarmouth, and they'd send them on to Lowestoft, and from there on to London. Then we went codding off the coast of Holland, for cod and haddock. It was just drawing on winter, and very cold. They set me with a line and I had to keep sawing it backwards and forwards till I felt a fish bite, then to hawl it up. One night I was a near froze, and suddenly I had two cods bite at once, and they nearly pulled me over, for they dart about like mad, and tug awful; so I said to the master, 'I don't like this work.' But he answers, 'You must like it the time you stops here.' So I made up my mind to bolt the first time I got to shore. I only did it as a change, to see if I liked it. You're right there, there ain't no drinking on board.

"When you hawl up a cod they bound about the deck, and they're as strong as a Scotch terrier dog. When we hold 'em down, we prick them under the fin, to let the wind out of them. It would choke them if we didn't let it out, for it hisses as it comes off. It's from dragging them up so quick out of fifteen-fathom water that gives 'em the wind. When they were pricked, we chucked them into the well in the hold, and let them swim about. We killed them when we got to Gravesend by hitting them on the head with tom-boys—the sticks we hauls the line through. After three or four blows they're stunned, and the blood comes, and they're killed.

"When I goes into the public-houses, part of my performance is to play the whistle up my nose. I don't do it in the streets, because if I did there'd be thousands looking at me, and then the police would make a row. Last night I did it. I only pitched at one place, and did my night's work right off. I took 4s. 3½d. and lots of beer in an hour, from the cabbies and the people and all. At last the police told me to move on. When I plays the whistle up my nose, I puts the end of it in my nostril, and blows down it. I can do that just as easy as with my mouth, only not as loud. I do it as a variety, first in my mouth, then in my nose, and then back again in my mouth. It makes the people laugh. I've got a cold now, so I can't do it so well as at times, but I'll let you see what it is like."

He then inserted the wooden tongue of the whistle into his nostril, and blowing down it, began a hornpipe, which, although not so shrill as when he played it with the mouth, was still loud enough to be heard all over the house.

IV.—STREET ARTISTS.

I now come to the Street Artists. These include the artists in coloured chalks on the pavements, the black profile-cutters, and others.

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY.

WITHIN the last few years photographic portraits have gradually been diminishing in price, until at the present time they have become a regular article of street commerce. Those living at the west-end of London have but little idea of the number of persons who gain a livelihood by street photography.

There may be one or two "galleries" in the New-road, or in Tottenham-court-road, but these supply mostly shilling portraits. In the eastern and southern districts of London, however, such as in Bermondsey, the New-cut, and the Whitechapel-road, one cannot walk fifty yards without passing some photographic establishment, where for sixpence persons can have their portrait taken, and framed and glazed as well.

It was in Bermondsey that I met with the first instance of what may be called pure street photography. Here a Mr. F—I was taking sixpenny portraits in a booth built up out of old canvas, and erected on a piece of spare ground in a furniture-broker's yard.

Mr. F—I had been a travelling showman, but finding that photography was attracting more attention than giants and dwarfs, he relinquished the wonders of Nature for those of Science.

Into this yard he had driven his yellow caravan, where it stood like an enormous Noah's ark, and in front of the caravan (by means of clothes-horses and posts, over

which were spread out the large sail-like paintings (show-cloths), which were used at fairs to decorate the fronts of booths), he had erected his operating-room, which is about as long and as broad as a knife-house, and only just tall enough to allow a not particularly tall customer to stand up with his hat off: whilst by means of two window-sashes a glazed roof had been arranged for letting light into this little tent.

On the day of my visit Mr. F—I was, despite the cloudy state of the atmosphere, doing a large business. A crowd in front of his tent was admiring the photographic specimens, which, of all sizes and in all kinds of frames, were stuck up against the canvas-wall, as irregularly as if a bill-sticker had placed them there. Others were gazing up at the chalky-looking paintings over the door-way, and on which a lady was represented photographing an officer, in the full costume of the 11th Hussars.

Inside the operating-room we found a crowd of women and children was assembled, all of them waiting their turn to be taken. Mr. F—I remarked, as I entered, that 'It was wonderful the sight of children that had been took;' and he added, 'when one girl comes for her portrait, there's a dozen comes along with her to see it took.'

The portraits I discovered were taken by Mrs. F—I, who, with the sleeves of her dress tucked up to the elbows, was engaged at the moment of my visit in pointing the camera at a lady and her little boy, who, from his wild nervous expression, seemed to have an idea that the operatress was taking her aim previous to shooting him. Mr. F—I explained to me the reason why his wife officiated. "You see," said he, "people prefers more to be took by a woman than by a man. Many's a time a lady tells us to send that man away, and let the missis come. It's quite natural," he continued; "for a lady don't mind taking her bonnet off and tucking up her hair, or sticking a pin in here and there before one of her own sect, which before a man proves objectionable."

After the portrait had been taken I found that the little square piece of glass on which it was impressed was scarcely larger than a visiting card, and this being handed over to a youth, was carried into the caravan at the back, where the process was completed. I was invited to follow the lad to the dwelling on wheels.

The outside of the caravan was very remarkable, and of that peculiar class of architecture which is a mixture of coach-and-ship building. In the centre of the front of the show were little folding-doors with miniature brass knockers, and glass let into the upper panels. On each side of the door were long windows, almost big enough for a shop-front, whilst the white curtains, festooned at their sides, gave them a pleasant appearance. The

entire erection was coloured yellow, and the numerous little wooden joists and tie-beams, which framed and strengthened the vehicle, conferred upon it a singular plaid-like appearance.

I mounted the broad step-ladder and entered. The room reminded me of a ship's cabin, for it was panelled and had cross-beams to the arched roof, whilst the bolts and fastenings were of bright brass. If the windows had not been so large, or the roof so high, it would have resembled the fore-cabin of a Gravesend steamer. There were tables and chairs, as in an ordinary cottage room. At one end was the family bed, concealed during the day by chintz curtains, which hung down like a drop-scene before a miniature theatre; and between the openings of these curtains I could catch sight of some gaudily attired wax figures stowed away there for want of room, but standing there like a group of actors behind the scenes.

Along one of the beams a blunderbuss and a pistol rested on hooks, and the showman's speaking trumpet (as large as the funnel to a grocer's coffee-mill) hung against the wall, whilst in one corner was a kind of cabin stove of polished brass, before which a boy was drying some of the portraits that had been recently taken.

"So you've took him at last," said the proprietor, who accompanied us as he snatched the portrait from the boy's hand. "Well, the eyes ain't no great things, but as it's the third attempt it must do."

On inspecting the portrait I found it to be one of those drab-looking portraits with a light back-ground, where the figure rises from the bottom of the plate as straight as a post, and is in the cramped, nervous attitude of a patient in a dentist's chair.

After a time I left Mr. F—I's, and went to another establishment close by, which had originally formed part of a shop in the penny-ice-and-bull's-eye line—for the name-board over "Photographic Dépôt" was still the property of the confectioner—so that the portraits displayed in the window were surmounted by an announcement of "Ginger beer 1d. and 2d."

A touter at the door was crying out "Hi! hi!—walk inside! walk inside! and have your c'rect likeness took, frame and glass complete, and only 6d.—time of sitting only four seconds!"

A rough-looking, red-faced tanner, who had been staring at some coloured French lithographs which decorated the upper panes, and who, no doubt, imagined that they had been taken by the photographic process, entered, saying, "Let me have my likeness took."

The touter instantly called out, "Here, a shilling likeness for this here gent."

The tanner observed that he wanted only a sixpenny.

"Ah, very good, sir!" and raising his voice, the touter shouted louder than before—"A

sixpenny one first, and a shilling one afterwards."

"I tell yer I don't want only sixpennorth," angrily returned the customer, as he entered.

"At this establishment the portraits were taken in a little alley adjoining the premises, where the light was so insufficient, that even the blanket hung up at the end of it looked black from the deep shadows cast by the walls.

When the tanner's portrait was completed it was nearly black; and, indeed, the only thing visible was a slight light on one side of the face, and which, doubtlessly, accounted for the short speech which the operator thought fit to make as he presented the likeness to his customer.

"There," he said, "there is your likeness, if you like! look at it yourself; and only eightpence"—"Only sixpence," observed the man.—"Ah! continued the proprietor, "but you've got a patent American preserver, and that's twopence more."

Then followed a discussion, in which the artist insisted that he lost by every sixpenny portrait he took, and the tanner as strongly protesting that he couldn't believe that, for they must get some profit any how. "You don't tumble to the rig," said the artist; "it's the half-guinea ones, you see, that pays us."

The touter, finding that this discussion was likely to continue, entered and joined the argument. "Why, it's cheap as dirt," he exclaimed indignantly; "the fact is, our governor's a friend of the people, and don't mind losing a little money. He's determined that everybody shall have a portrait, from the highest to the lowest. Indeed, next Sunday, he do talk of taking them for threepence-halfpenny, and if that ain't philandery, what is?"

After the touter's oration the tanner seemed somewhat contented, and paying his eightpence left the shop, looking at his picture in all lights, and repeatedly polishing it up with the cuff of his coat-sleeve, as if he were trying to brighten it into something like distinctness.

Whilst I was in this establishment a customer was induced to pay twopence for having the theory of photography explained to him. The lecture was to the effect, that the brass tube of the "camerer" was filled with clock-work, which carried the image from the lens to the ground glass at the back. To give what the lecturer called "hockeylar proof" of this, the camera was carried to the shop-door, and a boy who was passing by ordered to stand still for a minute.

"Now, then," continued the lecturer to the knowledge-seeker, "look behind here; there's the himage, you see;" and then addressing the boy, he added, "Just open your mouth, youngster;" and when the lad did so, the student was asked, "Are you looking down the young un's throat?" and on his nodding assent, he was informed, "Well, that's the way portraits is took."