a chariot drawn by another bird, a goldfinch mule. I give him any name that comes into my head. The goldfinch harnesses himself to a little wire harness. Mr. and Mrs. Caudle and the mule is very much admired by people of taste. Then I have Marshal Ney in full uniform, and he fires a cannon, to keep up the character. I can't say that he's bolder than others. I have a little canary called the Trumpeter, who jumps on to a trumpet when I sound it, and remains there until I've done sounding. Another canary goes up a poll, as if climbing for a leg of mutton, or any prize at the top, as they do at fairs, and when he gets to the top he answers me. He climbs fair, toe and heel—no props to help him along. These are the principal birds, and they all play by the word of command, and with the greatest satisfaction and ease to themselves. I use two things to train them—kindness and patience, and neither of these two things must be stinted. The grand difficulty is to get them to perform in the open air without flying away, when they've no tie upon them, as one may say. I lost one by its taking flight at Ramsgate, and another at Margate. They don't and can't do anything to teach one another; not in the least; every bird is on its own account: seeing another bird do a trick is no good whatever. I teach them all myself, beginning with them from the nest. I breed most of them myself. To teach them to sing at the word of command is very difficult. I whistle to the bird to make it sing, and then when it sings I feed, and pet, and fondle it, until it gets to sing without my whistling—understanding my motions. Harshness wouldn't educate any bird whatsoever. I pursue the same system all through. The bird used to jump to be fed on the trumpet, and got used to the sound. To train Marshal Ney to fire his cannon, I put the cannon first like a perch for the bird to fly to for his food; it's fired by stuff attached to the touchhole that explodes when touched. The bird's generally frightened before he gets used to gunpowder, and flutters into the body of the cage, but after a few times he don't mind it. I train mice, too, and my mice fetch and carry, like dogs; and three of the little things dance the tight-rope on their hind legs, with balance-poles in their mouths. They are hard to train, but I have a secret way, found out by myself, to educate them properly. They require great care, and are, if anything, tenderer than the birds. I have no particular names for the mice. They are all fancy mice, white or coloured. I've known four or five in my way in London. It's all a lottery what I get. For the open-air performance, the West-end may be the best, but there's little difference. I have been ill seven months, and am just starting again. Then I can't work in the air in bad weather. I call 21*s.* a very good week's work; and to get that, every day must be fine—10*s.* 6*d.* is nearer the mark as an average for the year. An order to play at a private house may be extra; they give me what they please. My birds 'come with a whistle, and come with a call, and come with a good will, or they won't do at all'—for me. The police don't meddle with me—or nothing to notice. A good many of my birds and mice die before they reach any perfection—another expense and loss of time in my business. Town or country is pretty much the same to me, take it altogether. The watering-places are the best in the country, perhaps, for it's there people go for pleasure. I don't know any *best* place; if I did I'd stick to it. Ladies and children are my best friends generally."

The performance of the birds and mice above described is very clever. "Mr. and Mrs. Caudle" are dressed in red and blue cloaks, trimmed with silver lace and spangles; while Mr. Caudle, with an utter disregard of propriety, is adorned with a cocked hat.

SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOUR.

"Garret-Masters."

The Cabinet-makers, socially as well as commercially considered, consist, like all other operatives, of two distinct classes, that is to say, of society and non-society men, or, in the language of political economy, of those whose wages are regulated by custom and those whose earnings are determined by competition. The former class numbers between 600 and 700 of the trade, and the latter between 4000 and 5000. As a general rule I may remark, that I find the society-men of every trade comprise about one-tenth of the whole. Hence it follows, that if the non-society men are neither so skilful nor so well-conducted as the others, at least they are quite as important a body, from the fact that they constitute the main portion of the trade. The transition from the one class to the other is, however, in most cases, of a very disheartening character. The difference between the tailor at the west end, working for better shops at the better prices, and the poor wretch starving at starvation wages for the sweaters and slop-shops at the east end, has already been pointed out. The same marked contrast was also shown to exist between the society and non-society boot and shoemakers. The carpenters and joiners told the same story. There were found society men renting houses of their own—some paying as much as 70*l.* a-year—and the non-society men overworked and underpaid, so that a few weeks' sickness reduced them to absolute pauperism. Nor, I regret to say, can any other tale be told of the cabinet-makers; except it be, that the competitive men in this trade are even in a worse position than any other. I have already portrayed to the reader the difference between the homes of the two classes—the comfort and well-furnished abodes of the one, and the squalor and bare walls of the other. But those who wish to be impressed with the social advantages of a fairly-paid class of mechanics should attend a meeting of the Wood-carvers' Society. On the first floor of a small private house in Tottenham-street, Tottenham-court-road, is, so to speak, the museum of the working-men belonging to this branch of the cabinet-makers. The walls of the back-room are hung round with plaster casts of some of the choicest specimens of the arts, and in the front room the table is strewn with volumes of valuable prints and drawings in connexion with the craft. Round this table are ranged the members of the society—some forty or fifty were there on the night of my attendance—discussing the affairs of the trade. Among the collection of books may be found, "The Architectural Ornaments and Decorations of Cottingham," "The Gothic Ornaments" of Pugin, Tatham's "Greek Relics," Raphael's "Pilaster Ornaments of the Vatican," Le Pautre's "Designs," and Baptiste's "Collection of Flowers," large size; while among the casts are articles of the same choice description. The objects of this society are, in the words of the preface to the printed catalogue, "to enable wood-carvers to co-operate for the advancement of their art, and by forming a collection of books, prints, and drawings, to afford them facilities for self-improvement; also, by the diffusion of information among its members, to assist them in the exercise of their art, as well as to enable them to obtain employment." The society does not interfere in the regulation of wages in any other way than, by the diffusion of information among its members, to assist them in the exercise of their art, as well as to enable them to obtain employment; so that both employers and employed may, by becoming members, promote their own and each other's interests. The collection is now much enlarged, and with the additions that have been made to it, offers aid to the members which in many cases is invaluable. As a means of facilitating the use of this collection, the opportunities of borrowing from it have been made as general as possible. The meetings of the society are held at a place where attendance is unaccompanied by expense; and they are, therefore, says the preface, "free from all objection on account of inducements to exceed the time required for business." All this appears to be in the best possible taste, and the attention of the society being still directed to its improvement, assuredly gives the members, as they say, "good reason to hope that it will become one of which the wood-carver may be proud, as affording valuable assistance, both in the design and execution of any style of wood-carving." In the whole course of my investigations I have never experienced more gratification than I did on the evening of my visit to this society. The members all gave evidence, both in manner and appearance, of the refining character of their craft: and it was indeed a hearty relief from the scenes of squalor, misery, dirt, vice, ignorance, and discontent, with which these inquiries too frequently bring one into connexion, to find one's self surrounded with an atmosphere of beauty, refinement, comfort, intelligence, and ease.

The public, generally, are deplorably misinformed as to the character and purpose of trade societies. The common impression is that they are combinations of working-men, instituted and maintained solely with the view of exacting an exorbitant rate of wages from their employers, and that they are necessarily connected with strikes, and with sundry other savage and silly means of attaining this object. It is my duty, however, to make known that the rate of wages which such societies are instituted to uphold has, with but few exceptions, been agreed upon at a conference of both masters and men, and that in almost every case I find the members as strongly opposed to strikes, as a means of upholding them, as the public themselves. But at all events the maintenance of the standard rate of wages is not the sole object of such societies—the majority of them being organised as much for the support of the sick and aged as for the regulation of the price of labour; and even in those societies whose efforts are confined to the latter purpose alone, a considerable sum is devoted annually for the subsistence of their members when out of work. The general cabinet-makers, I have already shown, have contributed towards this object as much as 1000*l.* per annum for many years past. It is not generally known how largely the community is indebted to the trade and friendly societies of the working classes dispersed throughout the kingdom, or how much expense the public is saved by such means in the matter of poor-rates alone.

According to the last Government returns there are at present in England, Scotland, and Ireland, upwards of 33,000 such societies, 14,000 of which are enrolled and 8000 unenrolled—the remaining 11,000 being secret societies, such as the Odd Fellows, Foresters, Druids, Old Friends, and Rechabites. The number of members belonging to these 33,000 societies is more than three millions. The gross annual income of the entire associations is 4,980,000*l.* and their accumulated capital 11,360,000*l.* The working people of this country, and I believe of this country alone, contribute therefore to the support of their own poor nearly five millions of money every year, which is some thousands of pounds more than was dispensed in parochial relief throughout England and Wales in 1848. Hence it may be truly said, that the benefits conferred by the trade and friendly societies of the working classes are not limited to the individuals receiving them, but are participated in by every ratepayer in the kingdom, for were there no such institutions the poor-rates must necessarily be doubled.

I have been thus explicit on the subject of trade societies in general, because I know there exists in the public mind a strong prejudice against such institutions, and because it is the fact of belonging to some such society which invariably distinguishes the better class of workmen from the worse. The competitive men, or cheap workers, seldom or never are members of any association, either enrolled or unenrolled. The consequence is, that when out of work, or disabled from sickness or old age, they are left to the parish to support. It is the slop-workers of the different trades—the cheap men or non-society hands—who constitute the great mass of paupers in this country. And here lies the main social distinction between the workmen who belong to societies and those who do not—the one maintain their own poor, the others are left to the mercy of the parish. The wages of the competitive men are cut down to a bare subsistence, so that, being unable to save anything from their earnings, a few days' incapacity from labour drives them to the workhouse for relief. In the matter of machinery, not only is the cost of working the engine, but the wear and tear of the machine, considered as a necessary part of the expense of production. With the human machine, however, it is different, slop-wages being sufficient to defray only the cost of keeping it at work, but not to compensate for the wear and tear of it. Under the allowance system of the old poor-law, wages, it is well known, were reduced far below subsistence-point, and the workmen were left to seek parish relief for the remainder; and so in the slop part of every trade, the underpaid workmen when sick or aged are handed over to the state to support.

As an instance of the truth of the above remarks I subjoin the following statement, which has been furnished to me by the Chairmakers' Society concerning their outgoings:—

"Average number of members 110.

Paid to unemployed members from 1841 to 1850	£1256	10 0
Do. for insurance of tools	211	10 6
Do. do. loss of time by fire	19	2 8
Do. do. funerals of members	120	15 0
Do. do. collections for sick	60	4 0

"The objects which the London Chairmakers have in view by associating in a trade society," says the written statement from which the above account is extracted, "is to insure, as near as possible, one uniform price for the work they execute, so that the employer shall have a guarantee in making his calculations that he will not be charged more or less than his neighbours, who employ the same class of men: to assist their members in obtaining employment, and a just remuneration for the work they perform: to insure their tools against fire: to provide for their funerals in the event of death: and to relieve their members when unemployed or in sickness—the latter being effected by paying persons to collect voluntary subscriptions for invalid members, such subscriptions producing on an average 5*l.* in each case. The members have, moreover, other modes of assisting each other when in difficulties."

I may as well here subjoin the statement I have received from this society concerning the circumstances affecting their business.

"Our trade," say they, in a written communication to me, "has suffered very materially from a change which took place about 30 years ago in the system of work. We were at that time chiefly employed by what we term 'trade-working masters,' who supplied the upholsterers with the frames of chairs and sofas; but since then we have obtained our work directly from the sellers. At first the change was rather beneficial than otherwise. The employer and his salesman, however, have now, in the greater number of instances, no knowledge of the manufacturing part of the business, and this is very detrimental to our interest, owing to their being unacquainted with the value of the labour part of the articles we make. Moreover, the salesman sends all the orders he can out of doors to be made by the middlemen, though the customer is led to believe that the work is executed on the premises, whereas only a portion of it is made at home, and that chiefly the odd and out-of-the-way work, because the sending of such work out of doors would not answer the end of cheapness. The middleman, who executes the work away from the premises, subdivides the labour to such an extent that he is enabled to get the articles made much cheaper, as well as to employ both unskilful workmen and apprentices.

"Placed in the position where the employer gets the credit of paying us the legitimate price for our labour, it would appear that we have no cause of complaint; but, owing to the system of things before stated, as well as to the number of linendrapers, carpet-makers, and others, who have recently entered the trade without having any practical knowledge of the business, together with the casualty of our employment, our social position has become scarcely any better, or so good, as that of the unskilful or the dissipated workman, while, from the many demands of our fellow-operatives upon us, in the shape of pecuniary assistance, we have a severe struggle to maintain anything like a respectable footing in the community. The principal source of regret with us is, that the public have no knowledge of the quality of the articles they buy. The sellers, too, from their want of practical acquaintance with the manufacturing part of the business, have likewise an injurious effect upon our interests, instead of seconding our efforts to keep up a creditable position in society.

"The subjoined is the amount of the capital of our society at the present time:—

"Property in the Funds	£300
Out at use	175
Other available property, in the shape of price-books, &c.	200
	£675."

Such, then, is the state of the society men belonging to the cabinet-makers' trade. These, as I before said, constitute that portion of the workmen whose wages are regulated by custom, and it now only remains for me to set forth the state of those whose earnings are determined by competition. Here we shall find that the wages a few years since were from three to four hundred per cent better than they are at present, 20*s.* having formerly been the price paid for making that for which the operatives now receive only 5*s.*, and this notwithstanding that the number of hands in the London trade from 1831 to 1841 declined 33 per cent relatively to the rest of the population. Nor can it be said that this extraordinary depreciation in the value of the cabinet-makers' labour has arisen from any proportionate decrease in the quantity of work to be done. The number of houses built in the metropolis has of late been considerably on the increase. Since 1839 there have been 200 miles of new streets formed in London, no less than 6405 new dwellings having been erected annually since that time: and as it is but fair to assume that the majority of these new houses must have required new furniture, it is clear that it is impossible to account for the decline in the wages of the trade in question upon the assumption of an equal decline in the quantity of work. How, then, are we to explain the fact that, while the hands have decreased 33 per cent, and work increased at a considerable rate, wages a few years ago were 300 per cent better than they are at present? The solution of the problem will be found in the extraordinary increase that has taken place within the last 20 years of what are called "garret-masters" in the cabinet trade. These garret-masters are a class of small "trade-working masters," supplying both capital and labour. They are in manufacture what the peasant-proprietors are in agriculture, their own employers and their own workmen. There is, however, this one marked distinction between the two classes,—the garret-master cannot, like the peasant-proprietor, eat what he produces: the consequence is, that he is obliged to convert each article into food immediately he manufactures it, no matter what the state of the market may be. The capital of the garret-master being generally sufficient to find him in the materials for the manufacture of only one article at a time, and his savings being barely enough for his subsistence while he is engaged in putting those materials together, he is compelled the moment the work is completed to part with it for whatever he can get. He cannot afford to keep it even a day, for to do so is generally to remain a day unfed. Hence, if the market be at all slack, he has to force a sale by offering his goods at the lowest possible price. What wonder, then, that the necessities of such a class of individuals should have created a special race of employers, known by the significant name of "slaughter-house men?"—or that

these, being aware of the inability of the garret-masters to hold out against any offer, no matter how slight a remuneration it affords for their labour, should continually lower and lower their prices until the entire body of the competitive portion of the cabinet trade is sunk in utter destitution and misery? Moreover, it is well known how strong is the stimulus among peasant-proprietors, or indeed any class working for themselves, to extra production. So it is, indeed, with the garret-masters; their industry is indeed almost incessant, and hence a greater quantity of work is turned out by them, and continually forced into the market, than there would otherwise be. What though there be a brisk and a slack season in the cabinet-makers' trade, as in the majority of others? Slack or brisk, the garret-master must produce the same excessive quantity of goods. In the hope of extricating himself from his overwhelming poverty, he toils on, producing more and more; and yet the more he produces the more hopeless does his position become, for the greater the stock that he thrusts into the market the lower does the price of his labour fall, until at last he and his own family work for less than he himself could earn, a few years back, by his own unaided labour.

Another cause of the necessity of the garret-master to part with his goods as soon as made is the large size of the articles he manufactures, and the consequent cost of conveying them from slaughter-house to slaughter-house till a purchaser be found. For this purpose a van is frequently hired; and the consequence is, that he cannot hold out against the slaughterer's offer, even for an hour, without increasing the expense of carriage, and so virtually decreasing his gains. This is so well known at the slaughter-houses, that if a man, after seeking in vain for a fair remuneration for his work, is goaded by his necessities to call at a shop a second time to accept a price which he had previously refused, he seldom obtains what was first offered him. Sometimes when he has been ground down to the lowest possible sum, he is paid late on a Saturday night with a cheque, and forced to give the firm a liberal discount for cashing it.

For a more detailed account, however, of the iniquities practised upon this class of operatives, I refer the reader to the statements given below. It will be there seen that all the modes by which work can be produced cheap are in full operation. The labour of apprentices and children is the prevailing means of production. I heard of one small trade-working master who had as many as eleven apprentices at work for him; and wherever the operative is blessed with a family they all work, even from 6 years old. The employment of any undue number of apprentices also tends to increase the very excess of hands from which the trade is suffering; and thus it is, that the lower wages become, the lower still they are reduced. There are very few—some told me there were none, but there are a few who work as journeymen for little masters; but these men become little masters in their turn, or they must starve in idleness, for their employment is precarious. These men have no time for social intercommunication: the struggle to live absorbs all their energies, and confines all their aspirations to that one endeavour. Their labour is devoted, with the rarest exceptions, to the "slaughter-houses, linendrapers, 'polsterers, or warehouses." By all these names I heard the shopkeepers who deal in furniture of all kinds, as well as drapery goods, designated.

These men work in their own rooms, in Spitalfields and Bethnal-green; and sometimes two or three men in different branches occupy one apartment, and work together there. They are a sober class of men, but seem so perfectly subdued by circumstances, that they cannot or do not struggle against the system which several of them told me they knew was undoing them.

The subdivisions of this trade I need not give, they are as numerous as the articles of the cabinet-maker's calling.

I have mentioned that the black houses, or linendrapers at the west end of London, were principally supplied from the east end. In the neighbourhood of Tottenham-court-road and Oxford-street, for instance, most of my readers will have had their attention attracted by the dust-coloured appearance of some poor worker in wood carrying along his skeleton of an easy chair, or a sofa, or a couch, to dispose of in some shop. Often, too, a carter has to be employed for the same purpose, at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* an hour; and thus two hours will exhaust the very fullest value of a long day's labour. From a furniture-carter of this description I received some most shocking details of having to "busk" it, as this taking about goods for sale is called by those in the trade.

From a pale, feeble-looking man whom I met on a Saturday evening at the west end, carrying a mahogany chiffonier, I had the following statement:—

"I have dragged this chiffonier with me,' he said, "from Spitalfields, and have been told to call again in two hours (it was then half-past 7). I am too tired to drag it to another linendraper's, and indeed I shouldn't have so good a chance there; for if we go late, the manager considers we've been at other places, and he'll say, 'You needn't bring me what others have refused.' I was brought up as a general hand at ——, but was never in society, which is a great disadvantage. I feel that now. I used to make my 25*s.* or 28*s.* a-week six or seven years back; but then I fell out of employ, and worked at chair-making for a slaughter-house, and so got into the system, and now I can't get out of it. I have no time to look about me, as, if I'm idle, I can't get bread for my family. I have a wife and two children. They're too young to do anything; but I can't afford to send them to school, except every now and then 1*d.* or 2*d.* a-week, and so they may learn to read, perhaps. The anxiety I suffer is not to be told. I've nothing left to pawn now; and if I don't sell this chiffonier I must take it back, and must go back to a house bare of everything, except, perhaps, 3*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* my wife may have earned by ruining her health for a tailor's sweater; and 1*s.* 6*d.* of that must go for rent. I ought to have 2*l.* for this chiffonier, for it's superior mahogany to the run of such things; but I ask only 35*s.*, and perhaps may be bid 28*s.*, and get 30*s.*; and it may be sold, perhaps, by the linendraper for 3*l.* 3*s.* or 3*l.* 10*s.* Of course we're obliged to work in the slightest manner possible; but, good or bad, there's the same fault found with the article. I have already lost 3¼ hours; and there's my wife anxiously looking for my return to buy bread and a bit of beast's head for to-morrow. It's hard to go without a bit o' meat on Sundays; and, indeed, I must sell at whatever price—it don't matter, and that the linendraper depends upon."

I now subjoin a statement of a garret-master—a maker of loo tables—who was endeavouring to make a living by a number of apprentices:—

"I'm now 41," he said, "and for the last ten or twelve years have been working for a linendraper who keeps a slaughter-house. Before that I was in a good shop, Mr. D——'s, and was a general hand, as we were in the fair trade. I have often made my 50*s.* a-week on good work of any kind: now, with three apprentices to help me, I make only 25*s.* Work grew slack; and rather than be doing nothing, as I'd saved a little money, I made loo tables, and sold them to a linendraper, a dozen years back or so, and so somehow I got into the trade. For tables that, eighteen years ago, I had in a good shop 30*s.* for making, now 5*s.* is paid; but that's only in a slaughterer's own factory, when he has one. I've been told often enough by a linendraper, 'Make an inferior article, so as it's cheap: if it comes to pieces in a month, what's that to you or me?' Now, a 4-foot loo is an average; and if for profit and labour—and it's near two days' work—I put on 7*s.*, I'm bid 5*s.* less. I've been bid less than the stuff, and have on occasions been forced to take it. That was four years ago; and I then found I couldn't possibly live by my own work, and I had a wife and four children to keep; so I got some apprentices. I have now three, and two of them are stiff fellows of 18, and can do a deal of work. For a 4-foot loo table I have only 1*l.*, though the materials cost from 11*s.* to 13*s.*, and it's about two days' work. There's not a doubt of it that the linendrapers have brought bad work into the market, and have swamped the good. For work that, ten or twelve years ago, I had 3*l.* 5*s.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* from them, I have now 30*s.* Of course, it's inferior in quality in proportion, but it doesn't pay me half as well. I know that men like me are cutting one another's throats by competition. Fourteen years ago we ought to have made a stand against this system; but, then, we must live."

A pale young man, working in a room with two others, but in different branches, gave me the following account:—

"I have been two years making looking-glass frames. Before that I was in the general cabinet line, but took to this when I was out of work. I make frames only; the slaughter-houses put in the glasses themselves. If I had other work I couldn't afford to lose time going from one to another that I wasn't so quick at. I make all sizes of frames, from nine-sevens to twenty-four-eighteens (nine inches by seven, and twenty-four inches by eighteen). Nine-sevens are most in demand; and the slaughter-houses give 10*s.* 6*d.* a-dozen for them. Two years back they gave 15*s.* All sizes has fallen 3*s.* to 4*s.* a-dozen. I find all the material. It's mahogany veneered over deal. There's only five or six slaughter-houses in my way; but I serve the Italians or Jews, and they serve the slaughter-houses. There's no foreigners employed as I'm employed. It's not foreign competition as harms us—it's home. I almost ask more than I mean to take, for I'm always bid less than a fair price, and so we haggle on to a bargain. The best weeks I have had I cleared 25*s.*; but in slack times, when I can hardly sell at all, only 12*s.* Carrying the goods for sale is such a loss of time. Things are very bad now; but I must go on making, and get a customer when trade is brisker if I can. Glass has rose 1*s.* a-foot, and that's made a slack in the trade, for my trade depends greatly on the glass trade. I know of no women employed in my trade, and no apprentices. We are all little masters."

I shall now proceed to the other branch of the trade. The remarks I have made concerning the wretched social condition and earnings of fancy cabinet-makers who are in society, apply even more strongly to the non-society men. The society men are to be found chiefly in Clerkenwell; the non-society men in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green. With these unfortunate workmen there is yet a lower deep. The underpaid men of Clerkenwell work generally to order, if the payment be never so inadequate. But the still more underpaid men of Spitalfields work almost universally on speculation. The Spitalfields cabinet-maker finds his own material, which he usually purchases of the great cabinet-makers or the pianoforte-makers, being the veneers which are the refuse of their work. The supply of the east-end warehousemen is derived from little masters—men who work at their own abodes, and have the assistance of their wives and children. It is very rarely

that they, or their equally underpaid fellows in the general cabinet trade, employ an active journeyman. Almost every man in the trade works on his own account, finds his own material, and goes "on the busk to the slaughter-houses" for the chance of a customer.

I found the fancy cabinet-makers certainly an uninformed class, but patient, temperate, and resigned. Some few could neither read nor write, and their families were growing up as uninformed as the parents. The hawking from door to door of workboxes made by some of the men themselves, their wives assisting them with hawking, was far commoner than it is now; but it is still practised to a small extent.

I called on an old couple to whom I was referred, as to one of the few parties employed in working for the men who supplied the warehouses. The man's appearance was gaunt and wretched. He had been long unshorn; and his light blue eyes had that dull, half-glazed look, which is common to the old when spirit-broken and half-fed. His room, a small garret in Spitalfields, for which he paid 1*s.* 3*d.* a-week, was bare of furniture, except his work-bench and two chairs, which were occupied by his wife, who was at work lining the boxes her husband was making. A blanket rolled up was the poor couple's bed. The wife was ten years younger than her husband. She was very poorly clad in an old rusty black gown, tattered here and there; but she did not look very feeble.

"I am 63," the man said, and he looked 80, "and was apprenticed in my youth to the fancy cabinet trade. I could make 4*l.* 4*s.* a-week at it by working long hours when I was out of my time, forty-two years back. I have worked chiefly on workboxes. I didn't save money—I was foolish; but it was a hard-living and a hard-drinking time. I'm sorry for it now. Thirty years ago things weren't quite so good, but still very good; and so they were twenty years back. But since the slaughter-houses came in, men like me has been starving. Why here, sir, for a rosewood workbox like this, which I shall get 6*d.* for making, I used to give a brother of mine 6*s.* 6*d.* for making twenty years ago. I've been paid 22*s.* 6*d.* years ago for what I now get 2*s.* 6*d.* for. The man who employs me now works for a slaughter-house; and he must grind me down, or he couldn't serve a slaughter-house cheap enough. He finds materials, and I find tools and glue; and I have 6*s.* a-dozen for making these boxes, and I can only make a dozen a-week, and the glue and other odds and ends for them costs me 6*d.* a-dozen. That, with 9*d.* or 10*d.* a-week, or 1*s.*, that my wife may make, as she helps me in lining, is all we have to live on. We live entirely on tea and bread and butter, when we can get butter; never any change—tea, and nothing else all day; never a bit of meat on a Sunday. As for beer, I haven't spent 4*s.* on it these last four years. When I'm not at work for a little master, I get stuff of one, and make a few boxes on my own account, and carry them out to sell. I have often to go three or four miles with them; for there's a house near Tottenham-court-road that will take a few from me, generally out of charity. When I'm past work, or can't meet with any, there's nothing but the workhouse for me."

The decline which has taken place within the last twenty years in the wages of the operative cabinet-makers of London is so enormous, and, moreover, it seems so opposed to the principles of political economy, that it becomes of the highest importance in an inquiry like the present to trace out the circumstances to which this special depreciation is to be attributed. It has been before shown that the number of hands belonging to the London cabinet trade decreased between 1831 and 1841 33 per cent in comparison with the rest of the metropolitan population; and that, notwithstanding this falling off, the workman's wages in 1831 were at least 400 per cent better than they are at present; 20*s.* having formerly been paid for the making of articles for which now only 5*s.* are given. To impress this fact, however, more strongly upon the reader's mind, I will cite here a few of many instances of depreciation that have come to my knowledge. "Twenty years ago," said a workman in the fancy cabinet line, "I had 6*d.* an inch for the making of 20-inch desks of solid mahogany; that's 10*s.* for the entire article: now I get 2*s.* 3*d.* for the same thing. Smaller desks used to average us 6*s.* each for wages: now they don't bring us more than 1*s.* Ladies' 12-inch workboxes twenty years ago were 3*s.* 6*d.* and 4*s.* a-piece making; now they are 5*d.* for the commoner sort and 7*d.* for those with better work." "I don't understand per cents," said another workman, "but this I *do* know, the prices that I get have within this twenty years fallen from 4*s.* to 5*d.*, and in some cases to 4½*d.*"

Here, then, we find that wages in the competitive portion of the cabinet trade—that is among the non-society hands—(the wages of the society men I have before explained are regulated, or rather fixed by custom)—were twenty years ago 400 per cent better in some cases, and in others no less than 900 per cent higher than they are at present, and this while the number of workmen has decreased as much as one-third relatively to the rest of the population. How, then, is this extraordinary diminution in the price of labour to be accounted for? Certainly not on the natural assumption that the quantity of work has declined in a still greater proportion than the number of hands to do it, for it has also been proved that the number of new houses built annually in the metropolis, and therefore the quantity of new furniture required, has of late years increased very considerably.

In the cabinet trade, then, we find a collection of circumstances at variance with that law of supply and demand by which many suppose that the rate of wages is invariably determined. Wages, it is said, depend upon the demand and supply of labour; and it is commonly assumed that they cannot be affected by anything else. That they are, however, subject to other influences, the history of the cabinet trade for the last twenty years is a most convincing proof, for there we find, that while the quantity of work, or in other words, the demand for labour, has increased, and the supply decreased, wages, instead of rising, have suffered a heavy decline. By what means, then, is this reduction in the price of labour to be explained? What other circumstance is there affecting the remuneration for work, of which economists have usually omitted to take cognizance? The answer is, that wages depend as much on the distribution of labour as on the demand and supply of it. Assuming a certain quantity of work to be done, the amount of remuneration coming to each of the workmen engaged must, of course, be regulated, not only by the number of hands, but by the proportion of labour done by them respectively; that is to say, if there be work enough to employ the whole of the operatives for sixty hours a-week, and if two-thirds of the hands are supplied with sufficient to occupy them ninety hours in the same space of time, then one-third of the trade must be thrown fully out of employment: thus proving that there may be surplus labour without any increase of the population. It may, therefore, be safely asserted, that any system of labour which tends to make the members of a craft produce a greater quantity of work than usual, tends at the same time to over-populate the trade as certainly as an increase of workmen. This law may be summed up briefly in the expression that over-work makes under-pay.

Hence the next point in the inquiry is as to the means by which the productiveness of operatives is capable of being extended. There are many modes of effecting this. Some of these have been long known to students of political economy, while others have been made public for the first time in these letters. Under the former class are included the division and co-operation of labour, as well as the "large system of production;" and to the latter belongs "the strapping system," by which men are made to get through four times as much work as usual, and which I have before described. But the most effectual means of increasing the productiveness of labourers is found to consist, not in any system of supervision, however cogent, nor in any limitation of the operations performed by the workpeople to the smallest possible number, nor in the apportionment of the different parts of the work to the different capabilities of the operatives, but in connecting the workman's interest directly with his labour; that is to say, by making the amount of his earnings depend upon the quantity of work done by him. This is ordinarily effected in manufacture by means of what is called piece-work. Almost all who work by the day, or for a fixed salary—that is to say, those who labour for the gain of others, not for their own—have, it has been well remarked, "no interest in doing more than the smallest quantity of work that will pass as a fulfilment of the mere terms of their engagement." Owing to the insufficient interest which day-labourers have in the result of their labour, there is a natural tendency in such labour to be extremely inefficient—a tendency only to be overcome by vigilant superintendance (such as is carried on under the strapping system among the joiners) on the part of the persons who are interested in the result. The master's eye is notoriously the only security to be relied on. But superintend them as you will, day labourers are so much inferior to those who work by the piece, that, as we before said, the latter system is practised in all industrial occupations where the work admits of being put out in definite portions, without involving the necessity of too troublesome a surveillance to guard against inferiority (or scamping) in the execution. But if the labourer at piece-work is made to produce a greater quantity than at day-work, and this solely by connecting his own interest with that of his employer, how much more largely must the productiveness of workmen be increased when labouring wholly on their own account! Accordingly, it has been invariably found, that whenever the operative unites in himself the double function of capitalist and labourer, making up his own materials or working on his own property, his productiveness single-handed is considerably greater than can be attained under the large system of production, where all the arts and appliances of which extensive capital can avail itself are brought into operation.

Of the industry of working masters or trading operatives in manufactures there are as yet no authentic accounts. We have, however, ample records concerning the indefatigability of their agricultural counterparts—the peasant-proprietors of Tuscany, Switzerland, Germany, and other countries where the labourers are the owners of the soil they cultivate. "In walking anywhere in the neighbourhood of Zürich," says Inglis, in his work on Switzerland, the South of France, and the Pyrenees, "one is struck with the extraordinary industry of the inhabitants. When I used to open my casement, between four and five o'clock in the morning, to look out upon the lake and the distant Alps, I saw the labourer in the fields; and when I returned from an evening walk, long after sunset, as late perhaps as half-past eight, there was the labourer mowing his grass or tying up his vines." The same state of thing exists among the French peasantry under the same circumstances. "The in-

dustry of the small proprietor," says Arthur Young, in his "Travels in France," "were so conspicuous and so meritorious, that no commendation would be too great for it. It was sufficient to prove that property in land is, of all others, the most active instigator to severe and incessant labour." If, then, this principle of working for one's self has been found to increase the industry, and consequently the productiveness of labourers, to such an extent in agriculture, it is but natural that it should be attended with the same results in manufactures, and that we should find the small masters and the peasant-proprietors toiling longer and working quicker than labourers serving others rather than themselves. But there is an important distinction to be drawn between the produce of the peasant-proprietor and that of the small master. Toil as diligently as the little farmer may, since he cultivates the soil not for profit, but as a means of subsistence, and his produce contributes directly to his support, it follows that his comforts must be increased by his extra-production; or, in other words, that the more he labours, the more food he obtains. The small master, however, producing what he cannot eat, must carry his goods to market and exchange them for articles of consumption. Hence, by over-toil he lowers the market against himself; that is to say, the more he labours the less food he ultimately obtains.

But not only is it true that over-work makes under-pay, but the converse of the proposition is equally true, that under-pay makes over-work; that is to say, it is true of those trades where the system of piece-work or small mastership admits of the operative doing the utmost amount of work that he is able to accomplish, for the workman in such cases seldom or never thinks of reducing his expenditure to his income, but rather of increasing his labour, so as still to bring his income, by extra production, up to his expenditure. This brings us to another important distinction which it is necessary to make between the peasant-proprietor and the small master. The little farmer cannot increase his produce by devoting a less amount of labour to each of the articles; that is to say, he cannot scamp his work without diminishing his future stock. A given quantity of labour must be used to obtain a given amount of produce. None of the details can be omitted without a diminution of the result: scamp the ploughing and there will be a smaller crop. In manufactures, however, the result is very different. There one of the principal means of increasing the productions of a particular trade, and of the cabinet trade especially, is by decreasing the amount of work in each article. Hence, in such cases, all kinds of schemes and impositions are resorted to to make the unskilled labour equal to the skilled, and thus the market is glutted with slop-productions till the honourable part of the trade, both workmen and employers, are ultimately obliged to resort to the same tricks as the rest.

There were, about twenty years ago, a numerous body of tradesmen, who were employers, though not workmen to the general public, known as "trade-working masters." These men, of whom there are still a few, confined their business solely to supplying the trade. They supplied the greater establishments where there were showrooms with a cheaper article than the proprietors of those greater establishments might be able to have had manufactured on their own premises. They worked not on speculation, but to order, and were themselves employers. Some employed, at a busy time, from twenty to forty hands, all working on their premises, which were merely adapted for making, and not for selling or showing furniture. There are still such trade-working masters, the extent of their business not being a quarter what it was; neither do they now generally adhere to the practice of having men to work on their premises, but they give out the material, which their journeymen make up at their own abodes.

"About twenty years ago," said an experienced man to me, "I dare say the small masters formed about a quarter of the trade. The slacker trade becomes, the more the small masters increase; that's because they can't get other work to do; and so, rather than starve, they begin to get a little stuff of their own, and make up things for themselves, and sell them as best they can. The great increase of the small masters was when trade became so dead. When was it that we used to have to go about so with our things? About five years since, wasn't it?" said he, appealing to one of his sons, who was at work in the same room with him. "Yes, father," replied the lad, "just after the railway bubble; nobody wanted anything at all then." The old man continued to say,—"The greater part of the men that couldn't get employed at the regular shops then turned to making up things on their account; and now, I should say, there's at least one half working for themselves. About twelve years ago masters wanted to cut the men down, and many of the hands, rather than put up with it, took to making up for themselves. Whenever there's a decrease of wages there's always an increase of small masters; for it's not until men can't live comfortably by their labour that they take to making things on their own account."

I now come to the amount of capital required for an operative cabinet-maker to begin business on his own account.

To show the readiness with which any youth out of his time, as it is called, can start in trade as a garret cabinet master, I have learned the following particulars:—This lad, when not living with his friends, usually occupies a garret, and in this he constructs a rude bench out of old materials, which may cost him 2s. If he be penniless when he ceases to be an

apprentice, and can get no work as a journeyman, which is nearly always the case, for reasons I have before stated, he assists another garret-master to make a bedstead, perhaps; and the established garret-master carries two bedsteads instead of one to the slaughter-house. The lad's share of the proceeds may be about 5s.; and out of that, if his needs will permit him, he buys the article, and so proceeds by degrees. Many men, to start themselves, as it is called, have endured, I am informed, something like starvation most patiently. The tools are generally collected by degrees, and often in the last year of apprenticeship, out of the boy's earnings. They are seldom bought first-hand, but at the marine-store shops, or at the second-hand furniture brokers' in the New Cut. The purchaser grinds and sharpens them up at any friendly workman's where he can meet with the loan of a grindstone, and puts new handles to them himself out of pieces of waste wood. 10s. or even 5s. thus invested has started a man with tools, while 20s. has accomplished it in what might be considered good style. In some cases the friends of the boy, if they are not poverty-stricken, advance him from 40s. to 50s. to begin with, and he must then shift for himself.

When a bench and tools have been obtained, the young master buys such material as his means afford, and sets himself to work. If he has a few shillings to spare he makes himself a sort of bedstead, and buys a rug or a sheet and a little bedding. If he has not the means to do so he sleeps on shavings stuffed into an old sack. In some few cases he hires a bench alongside some other garret-master, but the arrangement of two or three men occupying one room for their labour is more frequent when the garrets where the men sleep are required for their wives' labour in any distinct business, or when the articles the men make are too cumbrous, like wardrobes, to be carried easily down the narrow stairs.

A timber merchant, part of whose business consists in selling material to little masters, gave me two instances, within his own knowledge, of journeymen beginning to manufacture on their own account.

A fancy cabinet-maker had 3s. 6d. at his command. With this he purchased material for a desk as follows:—

	s.	d.
3 ft. of solid ⅝ mahogany	1	0
2 ft. of solid ⅜ cedar for bottom, &c.	0	6
Mahogany top	0	3
Bead cedar for interior	0	6
Lining	0	4
Lock and key (no ward to lock)	0	2
Hinges	0	1
Glue and springs	0	1½
	2	11½

The making of the desk occupied four hours, as he bestowed extra pains upon it, and he sold it to a slaughterer for 3s. 6d. He then broke his fast on bread and water, bought material for a second desk and went to work again, and so he proceeds now; toiling and half-starving, and struggling to get 20s. a-head of the world to buy more wood at one time, and not pause so often in his work. "Perhaps," said my informant, "he'll marry, as most of the small masters do, some foolish servant-of-all-work, who has saved 3l. or 4l., and that will be his capital."

Another general cabinet-maker commenced business on 30s., a part of which he expended in the material for a 4-foot chest of drawers.

	s.	d.
3 ft. 6 inches of cedar for ends	4	0
Sets of mahogany veneers for three big and two little drawers	2	4
Drawer sweep (deal to veneer the front upon)	2	6
Veneer for top	1	3
Extras (any cheap wood) for inside of drawers, partitioning, &c.	5	0
5 locks	1	8
8 knobs, 1s., glue, sprigs, &c.	1	4
Set of four turned feet, beech-stained	1	6
	19	7

For the article when completed he received 25s., toiling at it for 27 or 28 hours. The tradesman from whom I derived this information, and who was familiar with every branch of the trade, calculated that three-fifths of the working cabinet-makers of London make for the warehouses—in other words, that there are 3000 small masters in the trade. The most moderate computation was that the number so employed exceed one half of the entire body of the 5000 metropolitan journeyman.

The next point in this inquiry is concerning the industry and productiveness of this class of workmen. Of over-work, as regards excessive labour, and of over-production from scamped workmanship, I heard the following accounts which different operatives, both in the fancy and general cabinet trade concurred in giving, while some represented the labour as of longer duration by at least an hour, and some by two hours a day, than I have stated.

The labour of the men who depend entirely on the slaughter-houses for the purchase of their articles, with all the disadvantages that I described in a former letter, is usually seven days a week the year through. That is seven days—for Sunday-work is all but universal—each of 13 hours, or 91 hours in all, while the established hours of labour in the honourable trade are six days of the week, each of 10 hours, or 60 hours in all. Thus 50 per cent is added to the extent of the production of low-priced cabinet work merely from over-hours, but in some cases I heard of 15 hours for seven days in the week, or 105 hours in all. The exceptions to this continuous toil are from one to three hours once or twice in the week, when the workman is engaged in purchasing his

material of a timber merchant, who sells it in small quantities, and from six to eight hours when he is employed in conveying his goods to a warehouse, or from warehouse to warehouse for sale. Concerning the hours of labour I had the following minute particulars from a garret-master who was a chairmaker.

"I work from 6 every morning to 9 at night—some work till 10—I breakfast at 8, which stops me for 10 minutes. I can breakfast in less time, but it's a rest; my dinner takes me say 20 minutes at the outside, and my tea 8 minutes. All the rest of the time I'm slaving at my bench. How many minutes' rest is that, sir? 38. Well, say three-quarters of an hour, and that allows a few sucks at a pipe when I rest; but I can smoke and work too. I have only one room to work and eat in, or I should lose more time. Altogether I labour 14¼ hours every day, and I must work on Sundays at least 40 Sundays in the year. One may as well work as sit fretting. But on Sundays I only work till it's dusk, or till five or six in summer. When it's dusk I take a walk; I'm not well-dressed enough for a Sunday walk when its light, and I can't wear my apron very well on that day to hide patches. But there's eight hours that I reckon I take up every week in dancing about to the slaughterers'. I'm satisfied that I work very nearly 100 hours a-week the year through, deducting the time taken up by the slaughterers and buying stuff—say eight hours a-week, it gives more than 90 hours a-week for my work, and there's hundreds labour as hard as I do just for a crust."

This excessive toil, however, is but one element of over-production. Scamping adds at least 200 per cent to the productions of the cabinet-maker's trade. I have ascertained several cases of this over-work from scamping, and adduce two. A very quick hand, a little master, working as he called it "at a slaughtering pace" for a warehouse, made 60 plain writing desks in a week of 90 hours, whilst a first-rate workman, also a quick hand, made 18 in a week of 70 hours. The scamping hand said he must work at the rate he did to make 14*s.* a-week from a slaughter-house, and so used to such style of work had he become, that though a few years back he did west-end work in the best style, he could not now make 18 desks in a week, if compelled to finish them in the style of excellence displayed in the work of the journeyman employed for the honourable trade. Perhaps, he added, he couldn't make them in that style at all. The frequent use of rosewood veneers in the fancy cabinet, and their occasional use in the general cabinet trade, gives, I was told, great facilities for scamping. If, in his haste, the scamping hand injure the veneer, or if it has been originally faulty, he takes a mixture of gum shellac and "colour," (colour being a composition of Venetian red and lamp black) which he has already by him, rubs it over the damaged part, smooths it with a slightly heated iron, and so blends it with the colour of the rosewood that the warehouseman does not detect the flaw. Indeed, I was told that very few warehousemen are judges of the furniture they bought, and they only require it to look well enough for sale to the public, who know even less than themselves. In the general cabinet trade I found the same ratio of scamping, compared with the products of skilled labour in the honourable trade. A good workman made a 4-foot mahogany chest of drawers in five days, working the regular hours, and receiving at piece-work price 35*s.* A scamping hand made five of the same size in a week, and had time to carry them for sale to the warehouses, wait for their purchase or refusal, and buy material. But for the necessity of doing this the scamping hand could have made seven in the 91 hours of his week, of course in a very inferior manner. They would hold together for a time, I was assured, and that was all; but the slaughterers cared only to have them viewy and cheap. These two cases exceed the average, and I have cited them to show what can be done under the scamping system.

I now come to show how this scamp work is executed, that is to say, by what helps or assistants when such are employed. As in all trades where lowness of wages is the rule, the apprentice system prevails among the cheap cabinet-workers. It prevails, however, among the garret-masters, by very many of them having one, two, three, or four apprentices, and so the number of boys thus employed through the whole trade is considerable. This refers principally to the general cabinet trade. In the fancy trade the number is greater, as the boys' labour is more readily available, but in this trade the greatest number of apprentices is employed by such warehousemen as are manufacturers, as some at the east end are—or rather by the men that they constantly keep at work. Of these men one has now 8, and another 14 boys in his service, some apprenticed, some merely engaged and discharged at pleasure. A sharp boy, thus apprenticed, in six or eight months becomes handy, but four out of five of the workmen thus brought up can do nothing well but their own particular branch, and that only well as far as celerity in production is considered.

I have before alluded to the utter destitution of the cheap workers belonging to the cabinet trade, and I now subjoin the statement of a man whom I found last winter in the Asylum for the Houseless Poor.

"I have been out of work a twelvemonth, as near as I can reckon. When I was in work I was sometimes at piece-work and sometimes at day-work. When I first joined the trade (I never served my time, my brother learnt me) there was plenty of work to do. For this last twelvemonth I have not been able to get anything to do, not at my own trade. I have made up one dozen of mahogany chairs on my own account. The wood and labour of them cost me 1*l.* 5*s.*, I had to pay for a man to do the carving and sweeping of them, and I had to give 1*l.* for the wood. I could get it much cheaper now, but then I didn't know anything about the old broken ship-wood that is now used for furniture. The chairs I made I had to sell at a sacrifice. I was a week making them, and got only 2*l.* for the dozen when they were done. By right I should have had at least 50*s.* for them, and that would have left 25*s.* for my week's work, but as it was I had only 15*s.* clear money, and I have worked at them much harder than is usual in the trade. There are two large houses in London that are making large fortunes in this manner. About a fortnight after I found out that I couldn't possibly get a living at this work, and as I didn't feel inclined to make the fortunes of the large houses by starving myself, I gave up working at chair-making on my own account. I then made a few clothes-horses. I kept at that for about six months. I hawked them in the streets, but I was half-starved by it. Some days I sold them, and some I was without taking a penny. I never in one day got rid of more than half-a-dozen, and they brought 3*s.*, out of which there was the wood and the other materials to pay for, and they would be 1*s.* 6*d.* at least. If I could get rid of two or three in a day I thought I did pretty well, and my profit on these was about 9*d.*, not more. At last I became so reduced by the work that I was not able to buy any more wood, and the week after that I was forced to quit my lodging. I owed three weeks' rent, at 1*s.* 6*d.* a week, and was turned out in consequence. I had no things for them to seize, they had all gone long before. Then I was thrown upon the streets. I had no friends (my brothers are both out of the country) and no home. I was sleeping about anywhere I could. I used to go and sit at the coffee-houses where I knew my mates were in the habit of going, and they would give me a bit of something to eat, and make a collection to pay for a bed for me. At last this even began to fail me, my mates could do no more for me. Then I applied to some of the unions, but they refused to admit me into the casual ward on account of my not being a traveller. I was a whole week walking in the streets without ever lying to rest. I used to go to Billingsgate to get a nap for a few minutes, and then I used to have a doze now and then on a door-step and under the railway arches. At this time I had scarcely any food at all, not even bread. At last I was fairly worn out, and being in the neighbourhood, I applied at St. Luke's, and told them I was starving. They said they could do nothing for me, and advised me to apply at the Houseless Poor Asylum. I did so, and was admitted directly. I have been four nights in the Asylum already, and I don't know what I shall do when I leave. My tools are all gone; they are sold, and I have no money to buy new ones. There are hundreds in the trade like me, walking about the streets with nothing to do and no place to put their heads in."

I shall now conclude with the following statement as to the effects produced by the slop cabinet business upon the honourable part of the trade. I derived my information from Mr. ——, one of the principal masters at the west-end, and who has the highest character for consideration for his men. "Since the establishment of slaughter-houses, and aptly indeed," said my informant, "from my knowledge of their effects upon the workmen, have they been named—the demand for articles of the best cabinet-work, in the manufacture of which the costliest woods and the most skilled labour London can supply are required, has diminished upwards of 25 per cent. The demand, moreover, continues still to diminish gradually. The result is obvious. Only three men are now employed in this trade in lieu of four as formerly, and the men displaced may swell the lists of the underpaid, and even of the slop-workers. The expense incurred by some of the leading masters in the honourable trade is considerable, and for objects the designs of which inferior masters pirate from us. The designs for new styles of furniture add from 5 to 10 per cent to the cost of the most elaborate articles that we manufacture. The first time any of these novel designs comes to the hammer by the sale of a gentleman's effects they are certain of piracy, and so the pattern descends to the slaughter-houses. These great houses are frequently offered prices, and by very wealthy persons, that are an insult to a tradesman wishing to pay a fair price to his workmen. For instance, for an 8-foot mahogany bookcase, after a new design, and made to the very best style of art, the material being the choicest, and everything about in admirable keeping, the price is 50 guineas. 'O dear!' some rich customer will say, '50 guineas! I'll give you 20, or, indeed, I'll give you 25.'" (I afterwards heard from a journeyman that this would be the cost of the labour alone.) The gentleman I saw spoke highly of the intelligence and good conduct of the men employed, only society men being at work on his premises. He feared that the slop-trade, if not checked, would more and more swamp the honourable trade.

The Doll's-Eye Maker.

A curious part of the street toy business is the sale of dolls, and especially that odd branch of it, doll's-eye making. There are only two persons following this business in London, and by the most intelligent of these I was furnished with the following curious information:—

"I make all kinds of eyes," the eye-manufacturer said, "both dolls' and human eyes; birds' eyes are mostly manufactured in Birmingham, and as you say, sir, bulls' eyes at

the confectioner's. Of dolls' eyes there are two sorts, the common and the natural, as we call it. The common are simply small hollow glass spheres, made of white enamel, and coloured either black or blue, for only two colours of these are made. The bettermost dolls' eyes, or the natural ones, are made in a superior manner, but after a similar fashion to the commoner sort. The price of the common black and blue dolls' eyes is five shillings for twelve dozen pair. We make very few of the bettermost kind, or natural eyes for dolls, for the price of those is about fourpence a pair, but they are only for the very best dolls. Average it throughout the year, a journeyman doll's-eye maker earns about thirty shillings a-week. The common dolls' eyes were twelve shillings the twelve dozen pairs twenty-five years ago, but now they are only five shillings. The decrease of the price is owing to competition, for though there are only two of us in the trade in London, still the other party is always pushing his eyes and underselling our'n. Immediately the demand ceases at all, he goes round the trade with his eyes in a box, and offers them at a lower figure than in the regular season, and so the prices have been falling every year. There is a brisk and a slack season in our business, as well as in most others. After the Christmas holidays up to March we have generally little to do, but from that time eyes begin to look up a bit, and the business remains pretty good till the end of October. Where we make one pair of eyes for home consumption, we make ten for exportation; a great many eyes go abroad. Yes, I suppose we should be soon over-populated with dolls if a great number of them were not to emigrate every year. The annual increase of dolls goes on at an alarming rate. As you say, sir, the yearly rate of mortality must be very high, to be sure, but still it's nothing to the rate at which they are brought into the world. They can't make wax dolls in America, sir, so we ship off a great many there. The reason why they can't produce dolls in America is owing to the climate. The wax won't set in very hot weather, and it cracks in extreme cold. I knew a party who went out to the United States to start as doll-maker. He took several gross of my eyes with him, but he couldn't succeed. The eyes that we make for Spanish America are all black. A blue-eyed doll wouldn't sell at all there. Here, however, nothing but blue eyes goes down; that's because it's the colour of the Queen's eyes, and she sets the fashion in our eyes as in other things. We make the same kind of eyes for the gutta-percha dolls as for the wax. It is true, the gutta-percha complexion isn't particularly clear; nevertheless, the eyes I make for the washable faces are all of the natural tint, and if the gutta-percha dolls look rather bilious, why I ain't a going to make my eyes look bilious to match.

"I also make human eyes. These are two cases; in the one I have black and hazel, and in the other blue and grey." [Here the man took the lids off a couple of boxes, about as big as binnacles, that stood on the table: they each contained 190 different eyes, and so like nature, that the effect produced upon a person unaccustomed to the sight was most peculiar, and far from pleasant. The whole of the 380 optics all seemed to be staring directly at the spectator, and occasioned a feeling somewhat similar to the bewilderment one experiences on suddenly becoming an object of general notice; as if the eyes, indeed, of a whole lecture-room were crammed into a few square inches, and all turned full upon you. The eyes of the whole world, as we say, literally appeared to be fixed upon one, and it was almost impossible at first to look at them without instinctively averting the head. The hundred eyes of Argus were positively insignificant in comparison to the 380 belonging to the human eye-maker.] "Here you see are the ladies' eyes," he continued, taking one from the blue-eye tray. "You see there's more sparkle and brilliance about them than the gentlemen's. Here's two different ladies' eyes; they belong to fine-looking young women, both of them. When a lady or gentleman comes to us for an eye, we are obliged to have a sitting just like a portrait-painter. We take no sketch, but study the tints of the perfect eye. There are a number of eyes come over from France, but these are generally what we call misfits; they are sold cheap, and seldom match the other eye. Again, from not fitting tight over the ball like those that are made expressly for the person, they seldom move 'consentaneously,' as it is termed, with the natural eye, and have therefore a very unpleasant and fixed stare, worse almost than the defective eye itself. Now, the eyes we make move so freely, and have such a natural appearance, that I can assure you a gentleman who had one of his from me passed nine doctors without the deception being detected.

"There is a lady customer of mine who has been married three years to her husband, and I believe he doesn't know that she has a false eye to this day.

"The generality of persons whom we serve take out their eyes when they go to bed, and sleep with them either under their pillow, or else in a tumbler of water on the toilet-table at their side. Most married ladies, however, never take their eyes out at all.

"Some people wear out a false eye in half the time of others. This doesn't arise from the greater use of them, or rolling them about, but from the increased secretion of the tears, which act on the false eye like acid on metal, and so corrodes and roughens the surface. This roughness produces inflammation, and then a new eye becomes necessary. The Scotch lose a great many eyes, why I cannot say; and the men in this country lose more eyes, nearly two to one. We generally make only one eye, but I did once make two false eyes for a widow lady. She lost one first, and we repaired the loss so well, that on her losing the other eye she got us to make her a second.

"False eyes are a great charity to servants. If they lose an eye no one will engage them. In Paris there is a charitable institution for the supply of false eyes to the poor; and I really think, if there was a similar establishment in this country for furnishing artificial eyes to those whose bread depends on their looks, like servants, it would do a great deal of good. We always supplies eyes to such people at half-price. My usual price is 2*l.* 2*s.* for one of my best eyes. That eye is a couple of guineas, and as fine an eye as you would wish to see in any young woman's head.

"I suppose we make from 300 to 400 false eyes every year. The great art in making a false eye is in polishing the edges quite smooth. Of dolls' eyes we make about 6000 dozen pairs of the common ones every year. I take it that there are near upon 24,000 dozen, or more than a quarter of a million, pairs of all sorts of dolls' eyes made annually in London."

THE COAL-HEAVERS.

The transition from the artisan to the labourer is curious in many respects. In passing from the skilled operative of the west-end to the unskilled workman of the eastern quarter of London, the moral and intellectual change is so great, that it seems as if we were in a new land, and among another race. The artisans are almost to a man red-hot politicians. They are sufficiently educated and thoughtful to have a sense of their importance in the State. It is true they may entertain exaggerated notions of their natural rank and position in the social scale, but at least they have read, and reflected, and argued upon the subject, and their opinions are entitled to consideration. The political character and sentiments of the working classes appear to me to be a distinctive feature of the age, and they are a necessary consequence of the dawning intelligence of the mass. As their minds expand, they are naturally led to take a more enlarged view of their calling, and to contemplate their labours in relation to the whole framework of society. They begin to view their class, not as a mere isolated body of workmen, but as an integral portion of the nation, contributing their quota to the general welfare. If property has its duties as well as its rights; labour, on the other hand, they say, has its rights as well as its duties. The artisans of London seem to be generally well-informed upon these subjects. That they express their opinions violently, and often savagely, it is my duty to acknowledge; but that they are the unenlightened and unthinking body of people that they are generally considered by those who never go among them, and who see them only as "the dangerous classes," it is my duty also to deny. So far as my experience has gone, I am bound to confess, that I have found the skilled labourers of the metropolis the very reverse, both morally and intellectually, of what the popular prejudice imagines them.

The unskilled labourers are a different class of people. As yet they are as unpolitical as footmen, and instead of entertaining violent democratic opinions, they appear to have no political opinions whatever; or, if they do possess any, they rather lead towards the maintenance of "things as they are," than towards the ascendancy of the working people. I have lately been investigating the state of the coalwhippers, and these reflections are forced upon me by the marked difference in the character and sentiments of these people from those of the operative tailors. Among the latter class there appeared to be a general bias towards the six points of the Charter; but the former were extremely proud of their having turned out to a man on the 10th of April, 1848, and become special constables for the maintenance of law and order on the day of the great Chartist demonstration. As to which of these classes are the better members of the state, it is not for me to offer an opinion; I merely assert a social fact. The artisans of the metropolis are intelligent, and dissatisfied with their political position: the labourers of London appear to be the reverse; and in passing from one class to the other, the change is so curious and striking, that the phenomenon deserves at least to be recorded in this place.

The labourers, in point of numbers, rank second on the occupation-list of the metropolis. The domestic servants, as a body of people, have the first numerical position, being as many 168,000, while the labourers are less than one-third that number, or 50,000 strong. They, however, are nearly twice as many as the boot and shoemakers, who stand next upon the list, and muster 28,000 individuals among them; and they are more than twice as many as the tailors and breeches-makers, who are fourth in regard to their number, and count 23,500 persons. After these come the milliners and dressmakers, who are 20,000 in number.

According to the Criminal Returns of the metropolis (for a copy of which I am indebted to the courtesy of a gentleman who expresses himself most anxious to do all in his power to aid the inquiry), the labourers occupy a most unenviable pre-eminence in police history. One in every twenty-eight labourers, according to these returns, has a predisposition for simple larceny: the average for the whole population of London is one in every 266 individuals;

so that the labourers may be said to be more than nine times as dishonest as the generality of people resident in the metropolis. In drunkenness they occupy the same prominent position. One in every twenty-two individuals of the labouring class was charged with being intoxicated in the year 1848; whereas the average number of drunkards in the whole population of London is one in every 113 individuals. Nor are they less pugnaciously inclined; one in every twenty-six having been charged with a common assault, of a more or less aggravated form. The labourers of London are, therefore, nine times as dishonest, five times as drunken, and nine times as savage as the rest of the community. Of the state of their education as a body of people I have no similar means of judging at present; nor am I in a position to test their improvidence or their poverty in the same conclusive manner. Taking, however, the Government returns of the number of labourers located in the different unions throughout the country at the time of taking the last census, I find that one in every 140 of the class were paupers; while the average for all England and Wales was one in every 159 persons: so that, while the Government returns show the labourers generally to be extraordinarily dishonest, drunken, and pugnacious, their vices cannot be ascribed to the poverty of their calling; for, compared with other occupations, their avocation appears to produce fewer paupers than the generality of employments.

Of the moral and prudential qualities of the coalwhippers and coalporters, as a special portion of the labouring population, the crude, undigested, and essentially unscientific character of all the Government returns will not allow me to judge. Even the Census affords us little or no opportunity of estimating the numbers of the class. The only information to be obtained from that document—whose insufficiency is a national disgrace to us, for there the trading and working classes are all jumbled together in the most perplexing confusion, and the occupations classified in a manner that would shame the merest tyro in logic—is the following:—

Of coal and colliery agents and factors there are in London . . .	16
Ditto dealers and merchants . .	1541
Ditto labourers, heavers, and porters	1700
Ditto meters	136
Total in the coal trade in London .	3393
Deduct from this the number of merchants from the London Post Office Directory	565
Hence the coal labourers in the metropolis amount to . . .	2828

But this is far from being an accurate result. There are at present in London upwards of 1900 (say 2000) registered coalwhippers, and as many more coalbackers or porters. These altogether would give as many as 4000 coal-labourers. Besides, there are 150 meters; so that, altogether, it may be safely said that the number engaged in the whipping and porterage of coals in London is 4000 and odd.

The following statistics, carefully collected from official returns, will furnish our readers with some idea of the amazing increase in the importation of coal:—

"About 300 years ago (say about 1550) one or two ships were sufficient for the demand and supply of London. In 1615, about 200 were equal to its demand; in 1705, about 600 ships were engaged in the London coal-trade; in 1805, 4856 cargoes, containing about 1,350,000 tons; in 1820, 5884 cargoes, containing 1,692,992 tons; in 1830, 7108 cargoes, containing 2,079,275 tons; in 1840, 9132 cargoes, containing 2,566,899 tons; in 1845, 2695 ships were employed in carrying 11,987 cargoes, containing 3,403,320 tons; and during the year 1848, 2717 ships, making 12,267 voyages, and containing 3,418,340 tons. The increase in the importation from the year 1838 to 1848, when the respective importations were 2,518,085 tons and 3,418,340 tons, is upwards of 90 per cent. Now, by taking 2700 vessels as the actual number now employed, and by calculating such vessels to average 300 tons burden per ship, and giving to a vessel of that size a crew of eight men, it will appear that at the present time 21,600 seamen are employed in the carrying department of the London coal-trade."

Before visiting the district of Wapping, where the greater part of the coal labour is carried on, I applied to the Clerk and Registrar of the Coal Exchange for the statistics connected with the body of which he is an officer. Such statistics—as to the extent of their great traffic, the weekly returns of sales, in short, the ramifications of an inquiry embracing maritime, mercantile, mining, and labouring interests, are surely the weekly routine of the business of the Registrar's office. I was promised a series of returns by the gentleman in question, but I did not receive and could not obtain them. Another officer, the Secretary of the Meters' Office, when applied to, with the sanction of his co-officer, the Clerk and Registrar, required a written application which should be attended to! I do not allude to these gentlemen with the slightest inclination unduly to censure them. The truth is, with questions affecting labour and the poor they have little sympathy. The labourer, in their eyes, is but a machine; so many labourers are as so many horse-power. To deny, or withhold, or delay information required for the purposes of the present inquiry is, however, unavailing. The matter I have given in fulness and in precision, without any aid from the gentlemen referred to

shows that it was more through courtesy than through necessity that I applied to them in the first instance.

Finding my time, therefore, only wasted in dancing attendance upon city coal officials, I made the best of my way down to the Coalwhippers' Office, to glean my information among the men themselves. The following is the result of my inquiries:—

The coal-vessels are principally moored in that part of the river called the Pool.

The Pool, rightly so called, extends from Ratcliffe-cross, near the Regent's-canal, to Execution-dock, and is about a mile long, but the jurisdiction of the Coal Commissioners reaches from the Arsenal at Woolwich to London-bridge. The Pool is divided into the Upper and Lower Pool; it is more commonly called the North and South side, because the colliers are arranged on the Ratcliffe and Shadwell side, in the Lower Pool, and on the Redriff and Rotherhithe side, in the Upper. The Lower Pool consists of seven tiers, which generally contain each from fourteen to twenty ships; these are moored stern to stern, and lie from seven to ten abreast. The Upper Pool contains about ten tiers. The four tiers at Mill-hole are equally large with the tiers of the Lower Pool. Those of Church-hole, which are three in number, are somewhat smaller; and those of the fast tiers, which are also three in number, are single, and not double tiers like the rest. The fleet often consists of from 200 to 300 ships. In the winter it is the largest, many of the colliers in the summer season going foreign voyages. An easterly wind prevents the vessels making their way to London; and, if continuing for any length of time, will throw the whole of the coalwhippers out of work. In the winter, the coalwhipper is occupied about five days out of eight, and about three days out of eight in the summer; so that, taking it all the year round, he is only about half of his time employed. As soon as a collier arrives at Gravesend, the captain sends the ship's papers up to the factor at the Coal Exchange, informing him of the quality and quantity of coal in the ship. The captain then falls into some tier near Gravesend, and remains there until he is ordered nearer London by the harbour-master. When the coal is sold and the ship supplied with the coal-meter, the captain receives orders from the harbour-master to come up into the Pool, and take his berth in a particular tier. The captain, when he has moored his ship into the Pool as directed, applies at the Coalwhippers' Office, and "the gang" next in rotation is sent to him.

There are upwards of 200 gangs of coalwhippers. The class, supernumeraries included, numbers about 2000 individuals. The number of meters is 150; the consequence is, that more than one-fourth of the gangs are unprovided with meters to work with them. Hence there are upwards of fifty gangs (of nine men each) of coalwhippers, or altogether 450 men more than there is any real occasion for. The consequence is, that each coalwhipper is necessarily thrown out of employ one-quarter of his time by the excess of hands. The cause of this extra number of hands being kept on the books is, that when there is a glut of vessels in the river, the coal-merchants may not be delayed in having their cargoes delivered from want of whippers. When such a glut occurs, the merchant has it in his power to employ a private meter; so that the 450 to 500 men are kept on the year through, merely to meet the particular exigency, and to promote the merchant's convenience. Did any good arise from this system to the public, the evil might be overlooked; but since, owing to the combination of the coalfactors, no more coals can come into the market than are sufficient to meet the demand *without lowering the price*, it is clear that the extra 450 or 500 men are kept on and allowed to deprive their fellow-labourers of one-quarter of their regular work as whippers, without any advantage to the public.

The coalwhippers, previous to the passing of the Act of Parliament in 1843, were employed and paid by the publicans in the neighbourhood of the river, from Tower-hill to Limehouse. Under this system, none but the most dissolute and intemperate obtained employment; in fact, the more intemperate they were the more readily they found work. The publicans were the relatives of the northern shipowners; they mostly had come to London penniless, and being placed in a tavern by their relatives, soon became shipowners themselves. There were at that time seventy taverns on the north side of the Thames, below bridge, employing coalwhippers, and all of the landlords making fortunes out of the earnings of the people. When a ship came to be "made up," that is, for the hands to be hired, the men assembled round the bar in crowds and began calling for drink, and outbidding each other in the extent of their orders, so as to induce the landlord to give them employment. If one called for beer, the next would be sure to give an order for rum; for he who spent most at the public-house had the greatest chance of employment. After being "taken on," their first care was to put up a score at the public-house, so as to please their employer, the publican. In the morning before going to their work, they would invariably call at the house for a quartern of gin or rum; and they were obliged to take off with them to the ship "a bottle," holding nine pots of beer, and that of the worst description, for it was the invariable practice among the publicans to supply the coalwhippers with the very worst articles at the highest prices. When the men returned from their work they went back to the public-house, and there remained drinking the greater part of the night. He must have been a very steady man indeed, I

am told, who could manage to return home sober to his wife and family. The consequence of this was, the men used to pass their days, and chief part of their nights, drinking in the public-house; and I am credibly informed that frequently, on the publican settling with them after leaving the ship, instead of having anything to receive they were brought in several shillings in debt; this remained as a score for the next ship: in fact, it was only those who were in debt to the publican who were sure of employment on the next occasion. One publican had as many as fifteen ships; another had even more; and there was scarcely one of them without his two or three colliers. The children of the coalwhippers were almost reared in the tap-room, and a person who has had great experience in the trade, tells me he knew as many as 500 youths who were transported, and as many more who met with an untimely death. At one house there were forty young robust men employed, about seventeen years ago, and of these there are only two living at present. My informant tells me that he has frequently seen as many as 100 men at one time fighting pell-mell at King James's-stairs, and the publican standing by to see fair play. The average money spent in drink by each man was about 12*s.* to each ship. There were about 10,000 ships entered the Pool each year, and nine men were required to clear each ship. This made the annual expenditure of the coalwhippers in drink, 54,000*l.*, or 27*l.* a year per man. This is considered an extremely low average. The wives and families of the men at this time were in the greatest destitution, the daughters invariably became prostitutes, and the mothers ultimately went to swell the number of paupers at the union. This state of things continued till 1843, when, by the efforts of three of the coalwhippers, the Legislature was induced to pass an Act forbidding the system, and appointing Commissioners for the registration and regulation of coalwhippers in the port of London, and so establishing an office where the men were in future employed and paid. Under this Act, every man then following the calling of a coalwhipper was to be registered. For this registration 4*d.* was to be paid; and every man desirous of entering upon the same business had to pay the same sum, and to have his name registered. The employment is open to any labouring man; but every new hand, after registering himself, must work for twenty-one days on half-pay before he is considered to be "broken in," and entitled to take rank and receive pay as a regular coalwhipper.

All the coalwhippers are arranged in gangs of eight whippers, with a basket-man or foreman. These gangs are numbered from 1 up to 218, which is the highest number at the present time. The basket-men, or foremen, enter their names in a rotation-book kept in the office, and as their names stand in that book so do they take their turn to clear the ship that is offered. On a ship being offered, a printed form of application, kept in the office, is filled up by the captain, in which he states the number of tons, the price, and time in which she is to be delivered. If the gang whose turn of work it is refuse the ship at the price offered, then it is offered to all the gangs, and if accepted by any other gang, the next in rotation may claim it as their right, before all others. In connexion with the office there is a long hall, extending from the street to the water-side, where the men wait to take their turn. There is also a room called the basket-men's room, where the foremen of the gang remain in attendance. There is likewise a floating pier called a dépôt, which is used as a receptacle for the tackle with which the colliers are unloaded. This floating pier is fitted up with seats, where the men wait in the summer. The usual price at present for delivering the colliers is 8*d.* per ton; but in case of a less price being offered, and the gangs all refusing it, then the captain is at liberty to employ any hands he pleases. According to the Act, however, the owner or purchaser of the coals is at liberty to employ his own servants, provided they have been in his service fourteen clear days previous, and so have become what the Act terms *bonâ fide* servants. This is very often taken advantage of, for the purpose of obtaining labourers at a less price. One lighterman, who is employed by the gas companies to "lighter" their coals to their various destinations, makes a practice of employing parties whom he calls the *bonâ fide* servants of the gas companies, to deliver the coals at a penny per ton less than the regular price. Besides this, he takes one man's pay to himself, and so stops one-tenth of the whole proceeds, thereby realizing, as he boasts, the sum of 300*l.* per annum. Added to this, a relative of his keeps a beer-shop, where the "*bonâ fide* servants" spend the chief part of their earnings, thereby bringing back the old system, which was the cause of so much misery and destitution to the work-people.

According to the custom of the trade, the rate at which a ship is to be delivered is forty-nine tons per day, and if the ship cannot be delivered at that rate, owing to the merchant failing to send craft to receive the coals, then the coalwhippers are entitled to receive pay at the rate of forty-nine tons per day, for each day they are kept in the ship over and above the time allowed by the custom of the trade for the delivery of the coals. The merchants, however, if they should have failed to send craft, and so keep the men idle on the first days of the contract, can, by the by-laws of the Commissioners, compel the coalwhippers to deliver the ship at the rate of ninety-eight tons per day: the merchants surely should be made to pay for the loss of time to the men at the same rate. The wrong done by this practice is rendered more apparent by the conduct of the merchants during the brisk and slack periods. When there is a slack, the merchants are all anxious to get their vessels delivered as fast as they can, because coals are wanting, and are consequently at a high price; then the men are taxed beyond their power, and are frequently made to deliver 150 to 200 tons per day, or to do four days' work in one. On the contrary, when there is a glut of ships, and the merchants are not particularly anxious about the delivery of the coals, the men are left to idle away their time upon the decks for the first two or three days of the contract, and then forced to the same extra exertion for the last two or three days, in order to make up for the lost time of the merchant, and so save him from being put to extra expense by his own neglect. The cause of the injustice of these by-laws may be fairly traced to the fact of there being several coal-merchants among the Commissioners, who are entrusted with the formation of bye-laws and regulations of the trade. The coalfactors are generally ship-owners, and occasionally pit-owners; and when a glut of ships come in they combine together to keep up the prices, especially in the winter time, for they keep back the cargoes, and only offer such a number of ships as will not influence the market. Since the passing of the Act, establishing the Coalwhippers' Office, and thus taking the employment and pay of the men out of the hands of the publicans, so visible has been the improvement in the whole character of the labourers, that they have raised themselves in the respect of all who know them.

Within the last few years they have established a Benefit Society, and they expended in the year 1847, according to the last account, 646*l.* odd, in the relief of the sick and the burial of the dead. They have also established a superannuation fund, out of which they allow 5*s.* per week to each member who is incapacitated from old age or accident. They are, at the present time, paying such pensions to twenty members. At the time of the celebrated Chartist demonstration, on the 10th of April, the coalwhippers were, I believe, the first class of persons who spontaneously offered their services as special constables.

Further than this they have established a school, with accommodation for six hundred scholars, out of their small earnings. On one occasion as much as 80*l.* was collected among the men for the erection of this institution.

The men are liable to many accidents; some fall off the plank into the hold of the vessel, and are killed; others are injured by large lumps of coal falling on them; and, indeed, so frequent are these disasters, that the Commissioners have directed that the indivisible fraction which remains, after dividing the earnings of the men into nine equal parts, should be applied to the relief of the injured; and although the fund raised by these insignificant means amounts in the course of the year to 30*l.* or 40*l.*, the whole is absorbed by the calamities.

Furnished with this information as to the general character and regulations of the calling, I then proceeded to visit one of the vessels in the river, so that I might see the nature of the labour performed. No one on board the vessel (the ——, of Newcastle) was previously aware of my visit or its object. I need not describe the vessel, as my business is with the London labourers in the coal trade. It is necessary, however, in order to show the nature of the labour of coal-whipping, that I should state that the average depth of coal in the hold of a collier, from ceiling to combing, is sixteen feet, while there is an additional seven feet to be reckoned for the basket-man's "boom," which makes the height that the coals have to be raised by the whippers from twenty-three to thirty feet. The complement of a gang of coalwhippers is about nine. In the hold are four men, who relieve each other in filling a basket—only one basket being in use with coal. The labour of these four men is arduous: so exhausting is it in hot weather that their usual attire is found to be cumbrous, and they have often to work merely in their trousers or drawers. As fast as these four men in the hold fill the basket, which holds 1¼cwt., four whippers draw it up. This is effected in a peculiar and, to a person unused to the contemplation of the process, really an impressive manner. The four whippers stand on the deck, at the foot of what is called "a way." This way resembles a short rude ladder: it is formed of four broken oars lashed lengthways, from four to five feet in height (giving a step from oar to oar of more than a foot), while the upright spars to which they are attached are called "a derrick." At the top of this "derrick" is a "gin," which is a revolving wheel, to which the ropes holding the basket, "filled" and "whipped," are attached. The process is thus one of manual labour with mechanical aid. The basket having been filled in the hold, the whippers correctly guessing the time for the filling—for they never look down into the hold—skip up the "way," holding the ropes attached to the basket and the gin, and pulling the ropes at two skips, simultaneously, as they ascend. They thus hoist the loaded basket some height out of the hold, and, when hoisted so far, jump down, keeping exact time in their jump, from the topmost beam of the way on to the deck, so giving the momentum of their bodily weight to the motion communicated to the basket. While the basket is influenced by this motion and momentum, the basket-man, who is stationed on a plank flung across the hold, seizes the basket, runs on with it (the gin revolving) to "the boom," and shoots the contents into the weighing-machine. The boom is formed of two upright poles, with a

cross-pole attached by way of step, on to which the basket-man vaults, and rapidly reversing the basket, empties it. This process is very quickly effected, for if the basket-man did not avail himself of the swing of the basket, the feat would be almost beyond a man's strength, or, at least, he would soon be exhausted by it.

The machine is a large coal-scuttle or wooden box, attached to a scale connected with 2½ cwt. When the weight is raised by two deposits in the machine, which hangs over the side of the ship, it discharges it, by pulling a rope connected with it down a sliding wooden plane into the barge below. The machine holds 2½ cwt., and so the meter registers the weight of coal unladen. This process is not only remarkable for its celerity but for another characteristic. Sailors, when they have to "pull away" together, generally time their pulling to some rude chant; their "Yo, heave, yo," is thought not only to regulate but to mitigate the weight of their labour. The coalwhippers do their work in perfect silence: they do it indeed like work, and hard work, too. The basket-man and the meter are equally silent, so that nothing is heard but the friction of the ropes, the discharge of the coal from the basket into the machine, and from the machine into the barge. The usual amount of work done by the whippers in a day (but not as an average, one day with another) is to unload, or whip, ninety-eight tons! To whip one ton, sixteen basketfuls are required; so that to whip a single ton these men jump up and down 144 feet: for a day's work of ninety-eight tons, they jump up and down 13,088 feet, more in some instances; for in the largest ship the way has five steps, and ten men are employed. The coalwhippers, therefore, raise 1¼ cwt. very nearly four miles high, or twice as high as a balloon ordinarily mounts in the air: and, in addition to this, the coalwhippers themselves ascend very nearly 1½ mile perpendicularly in the course of the day. On some days they whip upwards of 150 tons —200 have been whipped, when double this labour must be gone through. The ninety-eight tons take about seven hours. The basket-man's work is the most critical, and accidents, from his falling into the hold, are not very unfrequent. The complement of men for the unlading of a vessel is, as I have said, nine: four in the hold, four whippers, and the basket-man—the meter forms a tenth, but he acts independently of the others. They seldom work by candlelight, and, whenever possible, avoid working in very bad weather; but the merchant, as I have shown, has great power in regulating their labour for his own convenience. The following statement was given to me by a coalwhipper on board this vessel:—

"We should like better wages, but then we have enemies. Now suppose you, sir, are a coal-merchant, and this gentleman here freights a ship of the captain—you understand me? The man who freights the ships that way is paid, by the captain, ninepence a-ton, for a gang of nine men, such as you've seen—nine coalwhippers—but these nine men, you understand me, are paid by the merchant (or buyer) only eightpence a ton; so that by every ton he clears a penny, without any labour or trouble whatsomever. I and my fellows is dissatisfied, but can't help ourselves. This merchant, too, you understand me, finds there's rather an opening in the Act of Parliament about whippers. By employing a man as his servant on his premises for fourteen days, he's entitled to work as a coalwhipper. We call such made whipper 'boneyfides.' There's lots of them, and plenty more would be made if we was to turn rusty. I've heard, you understand me, of driving a coach through an Act of Parliament, but here they drive a whole fleet through it."

The coalwhippers all present the same aspect —they are all black. In summer, when the men strip more to their work, perspiration causes the coal-dust to adhere to the skin, and blackness is more than ever the rule. All about the ship partakes of the grimness of the prevailing hue. The sails are black; the gilding on the figure-head of the vessel becomes blackened, and the very visitor feels his complexion soon grow sable. The dress of the whippers is of every description; some have fustian jackets, some have sailors' jackets, some loose great coats, some Guernsey frocks. Many of them work in strong shirts, which once were white with a blue stripe: loose cotton neckerchiefs are generally worn by the whippers. All have black hair and black whiskers—no matter what the original hue; to the more stubbly beards and moustachios the coal-dust adheres freely between the bristles, and may even be seen, now and then, to glitter in the light amidst the hair. The barber, one of these men told me, charged nothing extra for shaving him, although the coal-dust must be a formidable thing to the best-tempered razor. In approaching a coal-ship in the river, the side has to be gained over barges lying alongside—the coal crackling under the visitor's feet. He must cross them to reach a ladder of very primitive construction, up which the deck is to be reached. It is a jest among the Yorkshire seamen that every thing is black in a collier, especially the soup. When the men are at work in whipping or filling, the only spot of white discernible on their hands is a portion of the nails.

There are no specific hours for the payment of these men: they are entitled to their money as soon as their work is reported to be completed. Nothing can be better than the way in which the whippers are now paid. The basket-man enters the office of the pay-clerk of the coal commission at one door, and hands over an adjoining counter an amount of money he has received from the captain. The pay-clerk ascertains that the amount is correct. He then divides the sum into nine

portions, and, touching a spring to open a door, he cries out for "Gang such a number." The nine men, who, with many others, are in attendance in rooms provided for them adjacent to the pay-office, appear immediately, and are paid off. I was present when nine whippers were paid for the discharge of 363½ tons. The following was the work done and the remuneration received:—

	Day.	Tons.
Dec. 14th	1st	35
„ 15th	2nd	56
Sunday intervenes.		
„ 17th	3rd	84
„ 18th	4th	98
„ 19th	5th	90½
		363½

These 363½ tons, at 8*d.* per ton, realized to each man, for five days' work, 1*l.* 6*s.* 4¼*d.*; 10*s.* of which had been paid to each as subsistence money during the progress of the work. In addition to the work so paid to each, there was deducted a farthing in every shilling as office fees, to defray the expenses of the office. From this farthing reduction, moreover, the basket-man is paid 1½*d.* in the pound, as commission for bringing the money from the captain. Out of the sum to be divided on the occasion I specify there was an indivisible fraction of 1¼*d.* This, as it cannot be shared among nine men, goes to what is called "The Fraction Fund," which is established for the relief of persons suffering from accidents on board coal-ships. These indivisible fractions realize between 30*l.* and 40*l.* yearly.

Connected with the calling of the whippers I may mention the existence of the Purlmen. These are men who carry kegs of malt liquor in boats, and retail it afloat, having a license from the Waterman's Company to do so. In each boat is a small iron grating, containing a fire, so that any customer can have the chill off, should he require that luxury. The purlman, rings a bell to announce his visit to the men on board. There are several purlmen, who keep rowing all day about the coal fleet; they are not allowed to sell spirits. In a fog the glaring of the fire in the purlmen's boats, discernible on the river, has a curious effect, nothing but the fire being visible.

I was now desirous of obtaining some information from the men collectively. Accordingly I entered the basket-men's waiting-room, where a large number of them were "biding their turn;" and no sooner had I made my appearance in the hall, and my object became known to the men, than a rush was made from without, and the door was obliged to be bolted to prevent the over-crowding of the room. As it was, the place was crammed so full, that the light was completely blocked by the men piled up on the seats and lockers, and standing before the windows. The room was thus rendered so dark that I was obliged to have the gas lighted, in order to see to take my notes; I myself was obliged to mount the opposite locker to take the statistics of the meeting.

There were eighty-six present. To show how many had no employment whatever last week, forty-five hands were held up. One had had no employment for a fortnight; twenty-four no work for eight days. Of those who had worked during the previous week, eight had received 20*s.*; sixteen between 15*s.* and seventeen between 10*s.* and 15*s.*; ten between 5*s.* and 10*s.*; one had received under 5*s.*; twelve had received nothing. The average of employment as to time is this:—None are employed for thirty weeks during the year; all for twenty-five weeks or upwards, realizing 12*s.* perhaps, yearly, per week—so many of the men said; but the office returns show 1*s.* 1½*d.* per day as the average for the last nine months. "Waterage" costs the whipper an average of 6*d.* a-week the year through. "Waterage" means the conveyance from the vessels to the shore. Fourteen of the men had wives or daughters who work at slop needlework, the husbands being unable to maintain the family by their own labour. A coalwhipper stated that there were more of the wives of the coalwhippers idle, because they couldn't get work, than were at work. All the wives and daughters would have worked if they could have got it. "Why, your honour," one man said, "we are better off in this office than under the old system. We were then compulsory drunkards, and often in debt to a publican after clearing the ship." The men employed generally spent 12*s.* to 15*s.* a-week. Those unemployed had abundant credit at the publican's. One man said, "I worked for a publican who was also a butcher; one week I had to pay 9*s.* for drink, and 11*s.* for meat, and he said I hadn't spent sufficient. I was one of his constant men." At the time a ship was cleared, the whipper had often nothing to take home. "Nothing but sorrow," said one. The publican swept all; and some publicans would advance 2*s.* 6*d.* towards the next job, to allow a man to live. Many of the whippers now do not drink at all. The average of the drinking among the men, when at hard work, does not exceed three half-pints a-day. The grievances that once afflicted the coalwhipper, are still felt by the ballast-men. The men all stated the fact as to the 9*d.* allowed, and the 8*d.* per ton paid for whipping. They all represented that a lighterman, engaged by the gas companies, was doing them great injury, by employing a number of 'bonafides,' and taking the best ships away from the regular office, and giving them to the 'bonafides' who "whip" the vessel at a lower rate of wages—about 6*d.* a-ton. He is connected with a beer-shop, and the men are expected to buy his beer.

If this man gets on with his system, (all this the men concurred in stating,) the bad state of things prevailing under the publican's management might be brought back. Sixteen years ago each whipper received 11¼*d.* per ton, prices steady, and the men in union. "If it wasn't for this office," one man said, "not one man who worked sixteen years ago would be alive now." The Union was broken up about twelve years ago, and prices fell and fluctuated down as low as 6*d.*, and even 5½*d.*, sometimes rising and falling 1¼d. a-week. The prices continued fluctuating until the present office was established, in 1844. The shipowners and merchants agreed, at the commencement of the office, to give the whippers 9*d.* a-ton, and in three months reduced it to 8*d.* The publicans, it was stated, formed themselves into a compact body for the purpose of breaking down the present system, and they introduced hundreds of fresh hands to undersell the regular workers. In 1847 wages rose again to 9*d.*; the whippers appealing to the trade, urging the high price of provisions, and their appeal being allowed. This 9*d.* a-ton continued until the 1st of June last. At that time the 'bonafides' were generally introduced, and greatly increased, and getting three times the work the regular men did, they (the regular men) consented again to lower the prices. The 'bonafides' are no better off than the regular hands; for though they have much more work they have less per ton, and have to spend more in drink. The coalwhippers represented themselves as benefited by the cheapness of provisions. With dear provisions they couldn't, at their present earnings, live at all. The removal of the backing system had greatly benefited the whippers. On being asked how many had things in pawn, there was a general laugh, and a cry of "All of us." It is common to pawn a coat on Monday and take it out on Saturday night, paying a month's interest. One man said, "I have now in pawn seven articles, all wearing apparel, my wife's or my own, from 15*s.* down to 9*d.*" Four had in pawn goods to the amount of 5*l.* and upwards; five to 4*l.*; six to 3*l.*; thirteen to 2*l.*; thirteen to 1*l.*; under 1*l.* nineteen; five had nothing in pawn. When asked if all made a practice of pawning their coats during the week, there was a general assent. Some could not redeem them in time to attend church or chapel on a Sunday. One man said, that if all his effects were burnt in his absence, he would lose no wearing apparel. "Our children, under the old system, were totally neglected," they said; "the public-house absorbed everything." Under that system as many as 500 of the children of coalwhippers were transported; now that has entirely ceased; those charged with crime now were reared under the old system. "The legislature never did a better thing than to emancipate us," said the man; "they have the blessing and prayers of ourselves, our wives, and children."

After the meeting I was furnished with the following accounts of a basket-man, of which I have calculated the averages:—

First Quarter.—January 2, 1849, *to March* 28.

Employed	50 days	
Delivered	2570¼ tons	
Amount earned at 9*d.* per ton	£10	15 2¼
Deduct expenses of office 4*s.* 6*d.* Ditto waterage 8*s.* 4*d.*	0	12 10
	£10	2 4½
Average weekly earnings about	0	16 6

Second Quarter.—April 7 to June 30.

Employed	44 days	
Delivered	2609 tons	
Amount earned at 9*d.* per ton	£10	10 8
Deduct waterage 7*s.* 4*d.* Office expenses 4*s.* 4*d.*	0	11 8
	£9	19 0
Average weekly earnings	0	15 3½

Third Quarter—July 4 *to September* 24.

Employed	42 days	
Delivered	2485 tons	
Amount earned at 8*d.* per ton	£9	4 4¼
Deduct waterage 7*s.* 0*d.* Office expenses 3*s.* 10¼*d.*	£0	10 10½
	£8	13 6½
Average weekly earnings	0	14 2

Fourth Quarter—Oct. 4 to *Dec.* 20.

Employed	49 days	
Delivered	2858½ tons	
Amount earned at 8*d.* per ton	£9	16 4¼
Deduct waterage 8*s.* 2*d.* Office expenses 4*s.* 1¾*d.*	0	12 3¼
	£9	4 1
Average weekly earnings	0	14 1¾

First Quarter	£10	2 4¼
Second Quarter	9	19 0
Third Quarter	8	13 6½
Fourth Quarter	9	4 1
	£37	19 0
Average weekly earnings	0	14 6

Employed—First Quarter	50 days.
Second Quarter	44 „
Third Quarter	42 „
Fourth Quarter	49 „
	185 days.
Idle	180 days.

SECOND ACCOUNT.

Coalwhippers.

Employed	193 days	
Delivered	11,573¾ tons	
Amount earned at 9*d.* per ton	£46	15 10¼
Deduct waterage	1	12 2
	£45	3 8¼
Average weekly earnings	0	17 4½

THIRD ACCOUNT.

Employed	168 days	
Delivered	9874½ tons	
Amount earned	£37	19 0
Deduct waterage	1	8 0
Gross earnings	£36	11 0
Average weekly earnings	0	14 0½

The above accounts are rather above than under the average.

I then proceeded to take the statement of some of the different classes of the men. The first was a coalwhipper, whom the men had selected as one knowing more about their calling than the generality. He told me as follows:—

"I am about forty, and am a married man with a family of six children. I worked under the old system, and that to my sorrow. If I had been paid in money, according to the work I then did, I could have averaged 30*s.* a-week. Instead of receiving that amount in money, I was compelled to spend in drink 15*s.* to 18*s.* per week, when work was good; and the publican even then gave me the residue very grudgingly, and often kept me from eleven to twelve on Saturday night, before he would pay me. The consequences of this system were, that I had a miserable home to go to: I would often have faced Newgate as soon. My health didn't suffer, because I didn't drink the liquor I was forced to pay for. I gave most of it away. The liquors were beer, rum, and gin, all prepared the night before, adulterated shamefully for our consumption, as we dursn't refuse it,—dursn't even grumble. The condition of my poor wife and children was then most wretched. Now the thing is materially altered, thank God; my wife and children can go to chapel at certain times, when work is pretty good, and our things are not in pawn. By the strictest economy, I can do middling well—very well when compared with what things were. When the new system first came into operation, I felt almost in a new world. I felt myself a free man; I wasn't compelled to drink; my home assumed a better aspect, and keeps it still. Last Monday night I received 19*s.* 7*d.* for my work (five days) in the previous week. I shall now (Thursday) have to wait until Monday next before I can get to work at my business. Sometimes I get a job in idle times at the docks, or otherwise, and wish I could get more. I may make, one week with another, by odd jobs, 1*s.* a-week. Perhaps for months I can't get a job. All that time I have no choice but to be idle. One week with another, the year through (at 8*d.* per ton), I may earn 14*s.* The great evil is the uncertainty of the work. We have all to take our rotation. This uncertainty has this effect upon many of the men—they are compelled to live on credit. One day a man may receive 19*s.*, and be idle for eight days after. Consequently, we go to the dealer where we have credit. The chandler supplies me with bread, to be paid for next pay-day, charging me a halfpenny a loaf more. A man with a wife and family of six children, as I have, will consume sixteen or seventeen quartern loaves a-week; consequently, he has to pay 8*d.* a-week extra on account of the irregularity or uncertainty. My rotation would come much oftener but for the backing system and the 'bonafides.' I also pay the butcher from a halfpenny to a penny per pound extra for credit when my family requires meat, sometimes a bit of mutton, sometimes a bit of beef. I leave that to the wife, who does it with economy. I this way pay the butcher 6*d.* a-week extra. The additional cost to me of the other articles, cheese, butter, soap, &c., which I get on credit, will be 6*d.* a-week. Altogether that will be 3*l.* 18*s.* a-year. My rent for a little house with two nice little rooms is 3*s.* per week; so that the extra charge for credit would just pay my rent. Many coalwhippers deal with tallymen for their wearing apparel, and have to pay enormous prices. I have had dealings with a tallyman, and suffered for it, but for all that I must make application for a supply of blankets from him for my family this winter. I paid him 45*s.* for wearing apparel—a shawl for my wife, some dresses for the children, a blanket, and other things. Their intrinsic value was 30*s.* Many of us—indeed most of us, if not all of us—are always putting things in and out of the pawnshops. I know I have myself paid more than 10*s.* a-year for interest to the pawnbroker. I know some of my fellow-workmen who pay nearly 5*l.* a-year. I once put in a coat that cost me 3*l.* 12*s.* I could only get 30*s.* on it. I was never able to redeem it, and lost it. The articles lost by the coalwhippers pledged at the pawnshop are three out of four. There are 2000 coalwhippers, and I am sure that each has 50*s.* in pawn, making 5000*l.* in a-year. Interest may be paid on one half this amount, 2500*l.* The other half of the property, at least, is lost. As the pawnbroker only advances one-third of the value, the loss in the forfeiture of the property is 7500*l.*, and in interest 2500*l.*, making a total of 10,000*l.* lost every year, greatly through the uncertainty of labour. A coalwhipper's life is one of debt and struggles—it is a round of relieving, paying, and credit. We very rarely have a half-

penny in the pocket when we meet our credit. If any system could possibly be discovered which would render our work and our earnings more certain, and our payments more frequent, it would benefit us as much as we have been benefited by the establishment of the office."

I visited this man's cottage, and found it neat and tidy. His children looked healthy. The walls of the lower room were covered with some cheap prints; a few old books, well worn, as if well used, were to be seen; and everything evinced a man who was struggling bravely to rear a large family well on small means. I took the family at a disadvantage, moreover, as washing was going on.

Hearing that accidents were frequent among the class, I was anxious to see a person who had suffered by the danger of the calling. A man was brought to me with his hand bound up in a handkerchief. The sleeve of his coat was ripped open and dangled down beside his injured arm. He walked lame; and on my inquiring whether his leg was hurt, he began pulling up his trousers and unlacing his boot, to show me that it had not been properly set. He had evidently once been a strong, muscular man, but little now remained as evidence of his physical power but the size of his bones. He furnished me with the following statement:—

"I was a coalwhipper. I had a wife and two children. Four months ago, coming off my day's work, my foot slipped, and I fell and broke my leg. I was taken to the hospital, and remained there ten weeks. At the time of my accident I had no money at all by me, but was in debt to the amount of 10*s.* to my landlord. I had a little furniture, and a few clothes of myself and wife. While I was in the hospital, I did not receive anything from our benefit society, because I had not been able to keep up my subscription. My wife and children lived while I was in the hospital by pawning my things, and going from door to door to every one she knowed to give her a bit. The men who worked in the same gang as myself, made up 4*s.* 6*d.* for me, and that, with two loaves of bread that they had from the relieving officer, was all they got. While I was in the hospital the landlord seized for rent the few things that my wife had not pawned, and turned her and my two little children into the street. One was a boy three years old, and the other a baby just turned ten months. My wife went to her mother, and she kept her and my little ones for three weeks, till she could do so no longer. My mother, poor old woman, was most as bad off as we were. My mother only works on the ground, out in the country, at gardening. She makes about 7*s.* a-week in the summer, and in the winter she has only 9*d.* a-day to live upon; but she had at least a shelter for her child, and she willingly shared that with her daughter and her daughter's children. She pawned all the clothes she had, to keep them from starving; but at last everything was gone from the poor old woman, and then I got my brother to take my family in. My brother worked at garden-work, the same as my mother-in-law did. He made about 15*s.* a-week in the summer, and about half that in the winter time. He had a wife and two children of his own, and found it hard enough to keep them, as times go. But still he took us all in, and shared what he had with us, rather than let us go to the workhouse. When I was told to leave the hospital—which I was forced to do upon my crutches, for my leg was very bad still—my brother took me in too. He had only one room, but he got in a bundle of straw for me, and we lived and slept there for seven weeks. He got credit for more than a pound's worth of bread, and tea, and sugar for us; and now he can't pay, and the man threatens to summon him for it. After I left my brother's, I came to live in the neighbourhood of Wapping, for I thought I might manage to do a day's work at coalwhipping, and I couldn't bear to live upon his little earnings any longer—he could scarcely keep himself then. At last I got a ship to deliver; but I was too weak to do the work, and in pulling at the ropes my hands got sore, and festered for want of nourishment." [He took the handkerchief off and showed that it was covered with plaster. It was almost white from deficient circulation.] "After this I was obliged to lay up again, and that's the only job of work I've been able to do for these last four months. My wife can't do anything; she is a delicate, sickly little woman as well, and has the two little children to mind, and to look after me likewise. I had one pennyworth of bread this morning. We altogether had half-a-quartern loaf among the four of us, but no tea nor coffee. Yesterday we had some bread, and tea, and butter; but wherever my wife got it from I don't know. I was three days but a short time back without a taste of food." [Here he burst out crying.] "I had nothing but water that passed my lips. I had merely a little at home, and that my wife and children had. I would rather starve myself than let them do so: indeed, I've done it over and over again. I never begged: I'll die in the streets first. I never told nobody of my life. The foreman of my gang was the only one besides God that knew of my misery; and his wife came to me and brought me money and brought me food, and himself, too, many a time." ["I had a wife and five children of my own to maintain, and it grieved me to my heart," said the man who sat by, "to see them want, and I unable to do more for them."] "If any accident occurs to any of us who are not upon the society, they must be as bad off as I am. If I only had a little nourishment to strengthen me, I could do my work again; but, poor as I am, I can't get strength to do it, and not being totally incapacitated from ever resuming my labour, I cannot get any assistance from the superannuation fund of our men."

I told the man I wished to see him at his own home, and he and the foreman who had brought him to me, and who gave him a most excellent character, led me into a small house in a court near the Shadwell entrance to the London Docks. When I reached the place I found the room almost bare of furniture. A baby lay sprawling on its back on a few rags beside the handful of fire. A little shoeless boy, with only a light washed-out frock to cover him, ran shyly into a corner of the room as we entered. There was only one chair in the room, and that had been borrowed down stairs. Over the chimney hung to dry a few ragged infant's chemises that had been newly washed. In front of the fire, on a stool, sat the thinly-clad wife; and in the corner of the apartment stood a few old tubs. On a line above these were two tattered men's shirts, hanging to dry, and a bed was thrown on some boxes. On a shelf stood a physic-bottle that the man had got from the parish doctor, and in the empty cupboard was a slice of bread—all the food, they said, they had in the world, and they knew not where on earth to look for more.

I next wished to see one of the improvident men, and was taken to the lodging of one who made the following statement:—

"I have been a coalwhipper for twenty years. I worked under the old publican's system, when the men were compelled to drink. In those days 18*s.* didn't keep me in drink. I have now been a teetotaler for five years. I have the bit of grub now more regular than I had. I earn less than 13*s.* a-week. I have four children, and have buried four. My rent is 1*s.* 6*d.*" ["To-night," interrupted the wife, "if he won't part with his coat or boots, he must go without his supper."] "My wife," the man continued, "works at bespoke work—stay-making, but gets very little work, and so earns very little—perhaps 1*s.* 6*d.* a week."

This family resided in a wretched part of Wapping, called, appropriately enough, "the Ruins." Some houses have been pulled down, and so an open space is formed at the end of a narrow airless alley. The wet stood on the pavement of the alley, and the cottage in which the whipper I visited lived, seemed with another to have escaped when the other houses were pulled down. The man is very tall, and almost touched the ceiling of his room when he stood upright in it. The ceiling was as wet as a newly-washed floor. The grate was fireless, the children barefoot, and the bedstead (for there was a bedstead) was bedless, and all showed cheerless poverty. The dwelling was in strong contrast with that of the provident whipper whom I have described.

The Coalbackers.

I conclude with the statement of a coalbacker, or coalporter—a class to which the term coalheaver is usually given by those who are unversed in the mysteries of the calling. The man wore the approved fantail, and well-tarred short smock-frock, black velveteen knee breeches, dirty white stockings, and lace-up boots.

"I am a coalbacker," he said. "I have been so these twenty-two years. By a coalbacker, I mean a man who is engaged in carrying coals on his back from ships and craft to the waggons. We get 2¾*d.* for every fifth part of a ton, or 11¼*d.* per ton among five men. We carry the coals in sacks of 2 cwt., the sack usually weighs from 14 lbs. to 20 lbs., so that our load is mostly 238 lbs. We have to carry the load from the hold of the ship, over four barges, to the waggon. The hold of a ship is from sixteen to twenty feet deep. We carry the coals this height up a ladder, and the ship is generally from sixty to eighty feet from the waggon. This distance we have to travel over planks, with the sacks on our backs. Each man will ascend this height and travel this distance about ninety times in a day; hence he will lift himself, with 2 cwt. of coals on his back, 1460 feet, or upwards of a quarter of a mile high, which is three times the height of St. Paul's, in twelve hours. And besides this, he will travel 6300 feet, or 1¼ miles, carrying the same weight as he goes. The labour is very hard—there are few men who can continue at it." My informant said it was too much for him; he had been obliged to give it up eight months back; he had overstrained himself at it, and been obliged to lay up for many months. "I am forty-five years of age," he continued, "and have as many as eight children. None of them bring me in a sixpence. My eldest boy did, a little while back, but his master failed, and he lost his situation. My wife made slop-shirts at a penny each, and could not do more than three a-day. How we have lived through all my illness, I cannot say. I occasionally get a little job, such as mending the hats of my fellow-workmen: this would sometimes bring me in about 2*s.* in the week, and then the parish allowed four quartern loaves of bread and 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week for myself, wife, and eight children. Since I have overstrained myself, I have not done more than two days' work altogether. Sometimes my mates would give me an odd seven tons to do for them, for I was not able to manage more." Such accidents as overstraining are very common among the coalbackers. The labour of carrying such a heavy weight from the ship's hold is so excessive, that after a man turns forty he is considered to be past his work, and to be very liable to such accidents. It is usually reckoned that the strongest men cannot last more

than twenty years at the business. Many of the heartiest of the men are knocked up through the bursting of blood-vessels and other casualties, and even the strongest cannot continue at the labour three days together. After the second day's work, they are obliged to hire some unemployed mate to do the work for them. The coalbackers work in gangs of five men, consisting of two shovel-men and three backers, and are employed to deliver the ship by the wharfinger. Each gang is paid 11¼*d.* per ton, which is at the rate of 2¼*d.* per ton for each of the five men. The gang will do from thirty to forty tons in the course of the day. The length of the day depends upon the amount of work to be done, according to the wharfinger's orders. The coalbackers are generally at work at five o'clock in the morning, winter and summer. In the winter time, they have to work by the light of large fires in hanging caldrons, which they call bells. Their day's work seldom ends before seven o'clock in the evening. They are paid every night, and a man after a hard day's work will receive 6*s.* Strong, hearty men, who are able to follow up the work, can earn from 25*s.* to 30*s.* per week. But the business is a fluctuating one. In the summer time there is little or nothing to do. The earnings during the slack season are about one half what they are during the brisk. Upon an average, their earnings are 1*l.* a-week all the year round. The class of coalbackers is supposed to consist of about 1500 men. They have no provident or benefit society. Between seventeen and eighteen years ago, each gang used to have 1*s.* 0½*d.* per ton, and about a twelvemonth afterwards it fell to the present price of 11¼*d.* per ton. About six weeks back, the merchants made an attempt to take off the odd farthing; the reason assigned was the cheapness of provisions. They nearly carried it; but the backers formed a committee among themselves, and opposed the reduction so strongly that the idea was abandoned. The backers are paid extra for sifting, at the rate of 2*d.* per sack. For this office they usually employ a lad, paying him at the rate of 10*s.* per week. Upon this they will usually clear from 2*s.* to 4*s.* per week. The most injurious part of the backer's work is carrying from the ship's hold. That is what they object to most of all, and consider they get the worst paid for. They do a great injury to the coalwhippers, and the backers say it would be as great a benefit to themselves as to the coalwhippers, if the system was done away with. By bringing the ships up alongside the wharf, the merchant saves the expense of whipping and lightering, together with the cost of barges, &c. Many of the backers are paid at the public-house; the wharfinger gives them a note to receive their daily earnings of the publican, who has the money from the merchant. Often the backers are kept waiting an hour at the public-house for their money, and they have credit through the day for any drink they may choose to call for. While waiting, they mostly have two or three pots of beer before they are paid; and the drinking once commenced, many of them return home drunk, with only half their earnings in their pockets. There is scarcely a man among the whole class of backers, but heartily wishes the system of payment at the public-house may be entirely abolished. The coalbackers are mostly an intemperate class of men. This arises chiefly from the extreme labour and the over-exertion of the men, the violent perspiration and the intense thirst produced thereby. Immediately a pause occurs in their work, they fly to the public-house for beer. One coalbacker made a regular habit of drinking sixteen half-pints of beer, with a pennyworth of gin in each, before breakfast every morning. The sum spent in drink by the 'moderate' men varies from 9*s.* to 12*s.* per week, and the immoderate men on the average spend 15*s.* a-week. Hence, assuming the class of coalbackers to be 2000 in number, and to spend only 10*s.* a-week in drink each man, the sum that would be annually expended in malt liquors and spirits by the class would amount to no less than 52,000*l.* The wives and children of the coalbackers are generally in great distress. Sometimes no more than one quarter of the men's earnings is taken home at night.

"When I was moderate inclined," said one of them to me, "I used to have a glass of rum the first thing when I came out of a morning, just to keep the cold out—that might be as early as about five o'clock in the morning, and about seven o'clock I should want half a pint of beer with gin in it, or a pint without. After my work I should be warm, and feel myself dry; then I should continue to work till breakfast-time; then I should have another half pint with gin in it, and so I should keep on through the day, having either some beer or gin every two hours. I reckon that unless a man spent about 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* in drink, he would not be able to continue his labour through the day. In the evening, he is tired with his work, and being kept at the public-house for his pay, he begins drinking there, and soon feels unwilling to move, and he seldom does so until all his wages are gone." My informant tells me that he thinks the class would be much improved if the system of paying the men at the public-house was done away, and the men paid weekly instead of daily. The hard drinking he thinks a necessity of the hard labour. He has heard, he says, of coalbackers being teetotalers, but none were able to keep the pledge beyond two months. If they drink water and coffee, it will rather increase than quench their thirst. Nothing seems to quench the thirst of a hard-working man so well as ale.

"The only difference between the pay of the basketman and the whipper is the 1½*d.* in the

pound which the former receives for carrying the money from the captain of the ship to the clerk of the pay-office. He has also for this sum to keep a correct account of the work done by the men every day, and to find security for his honesty to the amount of 10*l.* To obtain this, they usually pay 2*s.* 6*d.* a-year to the Guarantee Society, and they prefer doing this to seeking the security of some baker or publican in the neighbourhood, knowing that if they did so, they would be expected to become customers of the parties."

I now resume my inquiry whether stimulating drinks are necessary for the performance of severe labour.

I have already published the statement of a coalbacker, who declared that it was an absolute necessity of that kind of labour that the men engaged in backing coals from the hold of a ship should, though earning only 1*l.* per week, spend at least 12*s.* weekly in beer and spirits, to stimulate them for their work. This sum, the man assured me, was a moderate allowance, for 15*s.* was the amount ordinarily expended by the men in drink every week. Now if this quantity of drink be a necessity of the calling, it follows that the men pursuing the severest labour of all—doing work that cripples the strongest in from twelve to twenty years—are the worst paid of all labourers, their actual clear gains being only from 5*s.* to 8*s.* per week. This struck me as being so terrible a state of things that I could hardly believe it to be true, though I was assured by several coalwhippers who were present on the occasion, that the coalbacker who had made the statement had in no way exaggerated the account of the sufferings of his fellow-workmen. I determined, nevertheless, upon inquiring into the question myself, and ascertaining, by the testimony and experience of different classes of individuals engaged in this, the greatest labour, perhaps, performed by any men, whether drink was really a necessity or luxury to the working man.

Accordingly, I called a meeting of the coalwhippers, that I might take their opinion on the subject, when I found that out of eighty individuals only four were satisfied that fermented liquors could be dispensed with by the labouring classes. I was, however, still far from satisfied upon the subject, and I determined, as the question is one of the greatest importance to the working men,—being more intimately connected with their welfare, physical, intellectual, and moral, than any other,—to give the subject my most patient and unbiassed consideration. I was anxious, without advocating any opinion upon the subject, to collect the sentiments of the coal labourers themselves; and in order that I might do so as impartially as possible, I resolved upon seeing—1st, such men as were convinced that stimulating liquors were necessary to the labouring man in the performance of his work; 2ndly, such men as once thought differently, and, indeed, had once taken the pledge to abstain from the use of all fermented liquors, but had been induced to violate their vow in consequence of their health having suffered; and 3rdly, such men as had taken the pledge and kept it without any serious injury to their constitutions. To carry the subject out with the fulness and impartiality that its importance seemed to me to demand, I further determined to prosecute the inquiry among both classes of coal labourers—the coalwhippers and coalbackers as well. The result of these investigations I shall now subjoin. Let me, however, in the first place, lay before the reader the following

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF DRUNKENNESS OF THE DIFFERENT TRADES IN LONDON.

Above the Average.

Button-makers, one individual in every	7·2
Tool-makers	10·1
Surveyors	11·8
Paper-makers and Stainers	12·1
Brass-founders	12·4
Gold-beaters	14·5
Millers	16·6
French Polishers	17·3
Cutlers	18·2
Corkcutters	19·7
Musicians	22·0
Opticians	22·3
Bricklayers	22·6
Labourers	22·8
General and Marine-store Dealers	23·2
Brushmakers	24·4
Fishmongers	28·2
Coach and Cabmen	28·7
Glovers	29·4
Smiths	29·5
Sweeps	32·2
Hairdressers	42·3
Tailors	43·7
Tinkers and Tinmen	45·7
Saddlers	49·3
Masons	49·6
Glassmakers, &c.	50·5
Curriers	50·6
Printers	52·4
Hatters and Trimmers	53·1
Carpenters	53·8
Ironmongers	56·0
Dyers	56·7
Sawyers	58·4
Turners	59·3
Engineers	59·7
Butchers	63·7
Laundresses	63.8
Painters	66·1
Brokers	67·7
Medical Men	68·0
Brewers	70·2
Clerks	73·4
Shopkeepers	77·1
Shoemakers	78·0
Coachmakers	78·8

Milliners	1 in every	81·4
Bakers		82·0
Pawnbrokers		84·7
Gardeners		97·6
Weavers		99·3
Drapers		102·3
Tobacconists		103·4
Jewellers		104·5
Artists		106·3
Publicans		108·0
Average		113·8

Below the Average.

Carvers and Gilders	125·2
Artificial Flower Makers	128·1
Bookbinders	148·6
Greengrocers	157·4
Watchmakers	204·2
Grocers	226·6
Clockmakers	286·0
Parish officers	373·0
Clergymen	417·0
Servants	585·7

The above calculations have been made from the Official Returns of the Metropolitan Police. The causes of the different degrees of intemperance here exhibited, I leave to others to discover.

After the meeting of coalwhippers just described, I requested some of the men who had expressed the various opinions respecting the necessity for drinking some kind of fermented liquor during their work to meet me, so that I might take down their sentiments on the subject more fully. First of all, came two of the most intelligent, who believed malt liquor to be necessary for the performance of their labour. One was a basketman or fireman, and the other an "up-and-down" man, or whipper; the first doing the lighter, and the second the heavier kind of work. The basketman, who I afterwards discovered was a good Greek and Latin scholar, said: "If I have anything like a heavy day's work to do, I consider three pints of porter a-day necessary. We are not like other labouring men, having an hour to dinner. Often, to save tide, we take only ten minutes to our meals. One thing I wish to remark is, that what renders it necessary to have the three pints of beer in winter, and two pots in summer, is the coal-dust arising from the work, which occasions great thirst. In the summer time the basketman is on the plank all day, and continually exposed to the sun, and in the winter to the inclemency of the weather. What with the labour and the heat, the perspiration is excessive. A basketman with a bad gang of men has no sinecure. In the summer he can wear neither coat nor waistcoat; very few can bear the hat on the head, and they wear nightcaps instead. The work is always done, in summer time, with only the shirt and trousers on. The basketman never takes off his shirt, like the whippers. The necessity for drink in the summer does not arise so much from the extent of the labour, as from the irritation caused by the coal-dust getting into the throat. There is not so much dust from the coals in the winter as in the summer, the coals being more damp in wet than in fine weather. It is merely the thirst that makes the drink requisite, as far as the basketman is concerned. Tea would allay the thirst, but there is no opportunity of having this on board ship. If there were an opportunity of having tea at our work, the basketman might manage to do with it as well as with beer. Water I don't fancy, especially the water of the river; it is very impure, and at the time of the cholera we were prohibited from drinking it. If we could get pure water, I do not think it would do as well for us, especially in winter time. In winter time it would be too cold, and too great a contrast to the heat of the blood. It would, in my opinion, produce stagnation in the circulation. We have had instances of men dying suddenly through drinking water when in a state of excitement." [He distinguishes between excitement and perspiration: he calls the basketman's labour an exciting one, and the whipper's work a heating one.] "The men who died suddenly were whippers. I never heard of a basketman dying from drinking cold water when at his work; I don't think they ever tried the experiment. The whippers have done so through necessity, not through choice. Tea is a beverage that I don't fancy, and I conceive it to be equally expensive, so I prefer porter. When I go off to my work early in the morning, I take about a pint of coffee with me in a bottle, and warm it up on board at the galley-fire for my breakfast; that I find quenches my thirst for the time as well porter. Porter would be too insipid the first thing in the morning; I never drank coffee through the day while at my work, so I cannot say what the effect would be. I drink porter when at my work, not as giving me greater strength to go through my labour, but merely as a means of quenching my thirst, it being as cheap as any other drink, with the exception of water, and less trouble to procure. Water I consider dangerous at our work, but I can't say that it is so from my own experience. I was in the hospital about seven years ago, and the doctor there asked me how many pints of beer I was in the habit of drinking per day. This was before the office was established. I told him, on the lowest calculation, six or seven; it was the case then under the old system; and he then ordered me two pints of porter a-day, as I was very weak, and he said I wanted a stimulus. I am not aware that it is the habit of the publicans to adulterate their porter with salt and water. If such is the case, it would, without a doubt, increase rather than diminish the thirst. I have often found that the beer sold by some of the publicans tends more to create than allay thirst. I am confident, that if the working men generally knew that salt and water was invariably mixed with the porter by the publicans, they would no longer hold to the notion that it could quench their thirst; but, to convince them of that, it would be almost necessary that they should see the publican adulterating the beer with their own eyes. If it really is the case that beer is adulterated with salt and water, it must be both injurious and heating to the labouring man. Some of the men who are in the habit of drinking porter at their work, very probably attribute the thirst created by the salt and water in the porter to the thirst created by the coal-dust or the work, and continue drinking it from the force of habit. The habit of drinking is doubtlessly the effect of the old system, when the men were forced to drink by the publicans who paid them. A most miraculous change, and one unparalleled in history, has been produced by altering the old mode of employing and paying the men. The reformation in the morals and character of the men is positively wonderful. The sons are no longer thieves, and the daughters are no longer prostitutes. Formerly it was a competition who could drink the most, for he who could do so got the most work. The introduction for a job was invariably, 'You know, Mr. So and So, I'm a good drinking man.' Seeing the benefit that has resulted from the men not drinking so much as formerly, I am of opinion that, though I take my beer every day myself, a great good would ensue if the men would drink even less than they do now, and eat more; it would be more conducive to their health and strength. But they have not the same facility for getting food over their work as there is for getting beer. You see, they can have credit for beer when they can't get a morsel of food on trust. There are no floating butchers or bakers, like there are floating publicans or purlmen. If there were, and men could have trust for bread and meat while at their work on the river, I am sure they would eat more and drink less, and be all the better for it. It would be better for themselves and for their families. The great evil of the drink is, that when a man has a little he often wants more, and doesn't know where to stop. When he once passes the 'rubi-can,' as I call it, he is lost. If it wasn't for this evil, I think a pint or two of porter would make them do their work better than either tea or water. Our labour is peculiar. The air is always full of coal-dust, and every nerve and muscle of the body is strained, and every pore of the body open, so that he requires some drink that will counteract the cold."

The next two that I saw were men who did the heaviest work; that is, "up-and-down men," or coalwhippers, as they are usually called. They had both of them been teetotalers. One had been so for eight years, and the other had tried it for three months. One who stood at least six feet and a half high, and was habited in a long blue great coat that reached to his heels, and made him look even taller than he was, said,—"I was a strict teetotaler for many years, and I wish I could be so now. All that time I was a coalwhipper at the heaviest work, and I have made one of a gang that have done as many as 180 tons in one day. I drank no fermented liquor the whole of the time; I had only ginger-beer and milk, and that cost me 1*s.* 6*d.* It was in the summer time. I didn't 'buff it' on that day; that is, I didn't take my shirt off. I did this work at the Regent's Canal; and there was a little milk-shop close on shore, and I used to run there when I was dry. I had about two quarts of milk and five bottles of ginger-beer, or about three quarts of fluid altgether. I found that amount of drink necessary. I perspired very violently; my shirt was wet through, and my flannels wringing wet with the perspiration over the work. The rule among us is, that we do 28 tons on deck, and 28 tons filling in the ship's hold. We go on in that way throughout the day, spelling at every 28 tons. The perspiration in the summer time streams down our foreheads so rapidly, that it will often get into our eyes before we have time to wipe it off. This makes the eyes very sore. At night, when we get home, we cannot bear to sit with a candle. The perspiration is of a very briny nature, for I often taste it as it runs down to my lips. We are often so heated over our work that the perspiration runs into the shoes; and often, from the dust and heat, jumping up and down, and the feet being galled with the small dust, I have had my shoes full of blood. The thirst produced by our work is very excessive; it is completely as if you had a fever upon you. The dust gets into the throat, and very nearly suffocates you. You can scrape the coal-dust off the tongue with the teeth; and do what you will it is impossible to get the least spittle into the mouth. I have known the coal-dust to be that thick in a ship's hold, that I have been unable to see my mate, though he was only two feet from me. Your legs totter under you, both before and after you are a teetotaler. I was one of the strongest men in the business; I was able to carry 7 cwt. on my back for fifty yards, and I could lift nine half-hundreds with my right-arm. After finishing my day's work I was like a child with weakness. When we have done 14 or 28 tons, we generally stop for a drop of drink, and then I have found that anything that would wet my mouth would revive me. Cold tea, milk, or ginger-beer, were refreshing, but not so much as a pint of porter. Cold water would give a pain in the inside, so that a man would have to lie down and be taken ashore, and, perhaps, give up work altogether. Many a man has been taken to the hospital merely through drinking cold water over his work.

They have complained of a weight and coldness in the chest; they say it has chilled the fat of the heart. I can positively state," continued the man, "that during the whole of eight years I took no fermented drink. My usual drink was cold tea, milk, ginger-beer, or coffee, whichever I could catch: the ginger-beer was more lively than the milk; but I believe I could do more work upon the milk. Tea I found much better than coffee. Cold tea was very refreshing; but if I didn't take it with me in a bottle, it wasn't to be had. I used to take a quart of cold tea with me in a bottle, and make that do for me all day, as well as I could. The ginger-beer was the most expensive, and would cost me a shilling, or more than that if I could get it. The milk would cost me sixpence or eightpence. For tea and coffee the expense would be about twopence the day. But often I have done the whole day's work without any drink, because I would not touch beer, and then I was more fit to be carried home than walk. I have known many men scarcely able to crawl up the ladder out of the hold, they were so fatigued. For myself, being a very strong man, I was never so reduced, thank God. But often, when I've got home, I've been obliged to drink three pints of milk at a stretch, before I could touch a bit of victuals. As near as I can guess it used to cost me, when at work, a shilling a-day for ginger-beer, milk, and other teetotal drinks. When I was not at work my drink used to cost me little or nothing. For eight years I stuck to the pledge, but I found myself failing in strength and health; I found that I couldn't go through a day's work as clever as I used before I left off drink, and when first I was a teetotaler. I found myself failing in every inch of my carcase, my limbs, my body and all. Of my own free-will I gave it up. I did not do it in a fit of passion, but deliberately, because I was fully satisfied that it was injuring my health. Shortly after taking the pledge I found I could have more meat than I used to have before, and I found that I neither got strong nor weak upon it. After about five years my appetite began to fail, and then I found my strength leaving me; so I made up my mind to alter the system. When I returned to beer, I found myself getting better in health and stronger daily. Before I was a teetotaler I used to drink heavy, but after teetotalism I was a temperate man. I am sure it is necessary for a hard-working man that he should drink beer. He can't do his work so well without it as he can with it, in moderation. If he goes beyond his allowance he is better without any. I have taken to drinking beer again within the last twelve months. As long as a man does not go beyond his allowance in beer, his drink will cost him quite as much when he is teetotaler as it will when he has not taken the pledge. The difference between the teetotal and fermented drinks I find to be this:—When I drank milk it didn't make me any livelier; it quenched my thirst, but didn't give me any strength. But when I drank a pint or a quart of beer, it did me so much good after a day's labour, that after drinking it I could get up and go to my work again. This feeling would continue for a considerable time; indeed, I think the beer is much better for a hard-working man than any unfermented drink. I defy any man in England to contradict me in what I say, and that is—a man who takes his reasonable quantity of beer, and a fair share of food, is much better with it than without."

Another man, who had been a teetotaler for three months at one time, and seven years at another, was convinced that it was impossible for a hard-working man to do his work as well without beer as with. "He had tried it twice, and he spoke from his own experience, and he would say that a little—that is, two pints, or three for a very hard day's labour,—would never hurt no man. Beyond that a man has no right to go; indeed, anything extra only makes him stupid. Under the old system, I used to be obliged to buy rum; and, over and over again, I've had to pay fifteenpence for half-a-pint of rum in a ginger-beer bottle; and have gone into the street and sold it for sixpence, and got a steak with the money. No man can say drink has ruined my constitution, for I've only had two pennyworth of antibilious pills in twenty-five years; and I will say, a little beer does a man more good than harm, and too much does a man more harm than good."

The next two "whippers" that I saw were both teetotalers. One had taken the pledge eight months before, and the other four years; and they had both kept it strictly. One had been cellarman at a public-house, and he said, "I neither take spruce nor any of the cordials: water is my beverage at dinner." The other had been an inveterate drunkard. The cellarman is now a basketman, and the other an up-and-down man, or whipper, in the same gang. The basketman said, "I can say this from my own experience,—that it is not necessary for a working man, doing the very hardest labour, to drink fermented liquors. I was an up-and-down man for two years, without tasting a drop of beer or spirits. I have helped to whip 189 tons of coal in one day, without any; and that in the heat of summer. What I had with me was a bottle of cocoa; and I took with that plenty of steak, potatoes, and bread. If the men was to take more meat and less beer, they would do much better. It's a delusion to think beer necessary. Often, the men who say the beer is necessary will deliver a ship, aye, and not half-a-dozen half-pints be drank aboard. The injury is done ashore. The former custom of our work—the compulsory system of drinking that we were under,—has so imbedded the idea of drink in the men, that they think it is actually necessary. It's not the least to be wondered at, that there's so many drunkards among them. I do not think we shall ever be able to undo the habit of drinking among the whippers in this generation. As far as I am concerned, since I've been a teetotaler, I have enjoyed a more regular state of health than I used before. Now that I am a basketman, I drink only water with my dinner; and during my work I take nothing. I have got a ship in hands—going to work on Monday morning. I shall have to run backwards and forwards on a one-and-twenty-foot plank, and deliver 300 tons of coals: and I shall do that upon water. That man," pointing to the teetotaler who accompanied him, "will be in it, and he'll have to help to pull the coals twenty foot above the deck; and he'll do it all upon water. When I was a coalwhipper myself, I used to drink cocoa. I took it cold with me of a morning, and warmed it aboard. They prophesied it would kill me in a week; and I know it's done me every good in life. I have drunk water when I was a-working up-and-down, and when I was in the highest perspiration, and never found it injure me. It allays the thirst more than anything. If it didn't allay the thirst I should want to drink often: but if I take a drink of water from the cask I find my thirst immediately quenched. Many of the men who drink beer will take a drink of water afterwards, because the beer increases their thirst, and heats them. That, I believe, is principally from the salt water in it: in fact, it stands to reason, that if beer is half brine it can't quench thirst. Ah! it's shocking stuff the purlmen make up for them on the river. When I was drinking beer at my employment, I used seldom to exceed three pints of beer a-day: that is what I took on board. What I had on shore was not, of course, to help me to do my labour. I know the beer used to inflame my thirst, because I've had to drink water after it over and over again. I never made a habit of drinking,—not since the establishment of the office. Previous to that, of course, I was obliged to drink. I've got 'jolly' now and then, but I never made a habit of it. It used to cost me about two shillings or two shillings and sixpence a-week, on the average, for drink, at the uttermost; because I couldn't afford more. Since I've taken the pledge, I'm sure it hasn't cost me sixpence a-week. A teetotaler feels less thirst than any other man. I don't know what natural thirst is, except I've been eating salt provisions. I belong to a total abstinence society, and there are about a dozen coalwhippers, and about the same number of coal-backers, members of it. Some have been total abstainers for twelve years, and are living witnesses that fermented drinks are not necessary for working men. There are about two hundred to two hundred and fifty coalwhippers, I have been given to understand, who are teetotalers. Those coalwhippers who have been total abstainers for twelve years, are not weaker or worse in health for the want of beer." [This statement was denied by a person present; but a gentleman, who was intimately acquainted with the whole body, mentioned the names of several men who had been, some ten years, and some upwards of twelve years, strict adherents to the principles of teetotalism.] "The great quantity of drinking is carried on ashore. I should say the men generally drink twice as much ashore as they do afloat. Those who drink beer are always thirsty. Through drinking over their work, a thirst is created aboard, which they set to drinking, when ashore, to allay; and, after a hard day's labour, a very little overcomes a man. One or two pots of beer, and the man is loth to stir. He is tired; and the drink, instead of refreshing him, makes him sleepy and heavy. The next morning after drinking he is thirstier still; and then he goes to work drinking again. The perspiration will start out of him in large drops, like peas. You will see it stream down his face and his hands, with the coal-dust sticking to them, just like as if he had a pair of silk gloves on him. It's a common saying with us, about such a man, that 'he's got the gloves on.' The drunkards always perspire the most over their work. The prejudice existing among the men in favour of drink is such, that they believe they would die without it. I am quite astonished to see such an improvement among them as there is; and I do think that, if the clergymen of the neighbourhood did their duty, and exerted themselves, the people would be better still. At one time there were as many as five hundred coalwhippers total abstainers; and the men were much better clothed, and the homes and appearance of the whippers were much more decent. What I should do if I drank, I don't know. I got 1*l.* for clearing a ship last week, and shan't get any more till Monday night; and I have six children and a wife to keep out of that. For this last fortnight I have only made 10*s.* a-week, so I am sure I couldn't even afford a shilling a-week for drink, without robbing my family."

The second teetotaler, who had been an inveterate drunkard in his time, stated as follows. Like most of the coalwhippers, he thought once that he could not do his work without beer. He used to drink as much as he could get. He averaged two pots at his work, and when he came on shore he would have two pots more.

"He had been a coalwhipper for upwards of twenty years, and for nineteen years and three months of that time he was a hard drinker,—a regular stiff 'un," said he; "I not only used," he added, "to get drunk, but I taught my children to do so,—I have got sons as big as myself, coalbackers, and total abstainers. Often I have gone home on

a Sunday morning drunk myself, and found two of my sons drunk,—they'd be unable to sit at the table. They were about fourteen then, and when they went out with me I used to teach them to take their little drops of neat rum or gin. I have seen the youngest 'mop up' his half-quartern as well as I did. Then I was always thirsty; and when I got up of a morning I used to go stalking round to the first public-house that was open, to see if I could get a pint or a quartern. My mouth was dry and parched, as if I had got a burning fever. If I had no work that day I used to sit in a public-house and spend all the money I'd got. If I had no money I would go home and raise it somehow. I would ask the old woman to give me the price of a pint, or perhaps the young uns were at work, and I was pretty safe to meet them coming home. Talk about going out of a Sunday! I was ashamed to be seen out. My clothes were ragged, and my shoes would take the water in at one end and let it out at the other. I keep my old rags at home, to remind me of what I was—I call them the regimentals of the guzzler. I pawned everything I could get at. For ten or twelve years I used a beer-shop regularly. That was my house of call. Now my home is very happy. All my children are teetotalers. My sons are as big as myself, and they are at work carrying 1¾ cwt. to 2 cwt. up a Jacob's ladder, thirty-three steps high. They do this all day long, and have been doing so for the last seven days. They drink nothing but water or cold tea, and say they find themselves the better able to do their work. Coalbacking is about the hardest labour a man can perform. For myself, too, I find I am quite as able to do my work without intoxicating drinks as I was with them. There's my basketman," said he, pointing to the other teetotaler, "and he can tell you whether what I say is true or not. I have helped to whip 147 tons of coal in the heat of summer. The other men were calling for beer every time they could see or hear a purlman, but I took nothing—I don't think I perspired so much as they did. When I was in the drinking custom, I have known the perspiration run down my arms and legs as if I'd been in a hot bath. Since I've taken the pledge I scarcely perspire at all. I'll work against any man that takes beer, provided I have a good teetotal pill—that is, a good pound of steak, with plenty of gravy in it. That's the stuff to work upon—that's what the working man wants—plenty of it, and less beer, and he'd beat a horse any day. I am satisfied the working man can never be raised above his present position until he can give over drinking. That is the reason why I am sticking to the pledge, that I may be a living example to my class that they can and may work without beer. It has made my home happy, and I want it to make every other working man's as comfortable. I tried the principle of teetotalism first on board a steamboat. I was stoker, and we burnt 27 cwt. of coals every hour we were at sea—that's very nearly a ton and a-half per hour. There, with the heat of the fire, we felt the effects of drinking strong brandy. Brandy was the only fermented drink we were allowed. After a time I tried what other stimulants we could use. The heat in the hold, especially before the fires, was awful. There were nine stokers and four coal-trimmers. We found that the brandy that we drank in the day made us ill, our heads ached when we got up in the morning, so four of us agreed to try oatmeal and water as our drink, and we found that suited us better than intoxicating liquor. I myself got as fat as a bull upon it. It was recommended to me by a doctor in Falmouth, and we all of us tried it eight or nine voyages. Some time after I left the company I went to strong drink again, and continued at it till the 1st of May last, and then my children's love of drink got so dreadful that I got to hate myself as being the cause of it. But I couldn't give up the drinking. Two of my mates, however, urged me to try. On the 1st of May I signed the pledge. I prayed to God on the night I went to give me strength to keep it, and never since have I felt the least inclination to return. When I had left off a fortnight I found myself a great deal better; all the cramps that I had been loaded with when I was drinking left me. Now I am happy and comfortable at home. My wife's about one of the best women in the world. She bore with me in all my troubles, and now she glories in my redemption. My children love me, and we club all our earnings together, and can always on Sunday manage a joint of sixteen or seventeen pounds. My wife, now that we are teetotalers, need do no work; and, in conclusion, I must say that I have much cause to bless the Lord that ever I signed the teetotal pledge.

"After I leave my work," added the teetotaler, "I find the best thing I can have to refresh me is a good wash of my face and shoulders in cold water. This is twice as enlivening as ever I found beer. Once a fortnight I goes over to Goulston-square, Whitechapel, and have a warm bath. This is one of the finest things that ever was invented for the working man. Any persons that use them don't want beer. I invited a coalwhipper-man to come with me once. 'How much does it cost?' he asked. I told him, 'A penny.' 'Well,' he said, 'I'd sooner have half-a-pint of beer. I haven't washed my body for these twenty-two years, and don't see why I should begin to have anything to do with these new-fangled notions at my time of life.' I will say, that a good wash is better for the working man than the best drink."

The man ultimately made a particular request that his statement might conclude with a verse that he had chosen from the Temperance Melodies:—

"And now we love the social cheer
Of the bright winter eve;
We have no cause for sigh or tear,
We have no cause to grieve.

Our wives are clad, our children fed;
We boast where'er we go—
'Twas all because we sign'd the pledge,
A long, long time ago."

At the close of my interview with these men I received from them an invitation to visit them at their own houses whenever I should think fit. It was clearly their desire that I should see the comforts and domestic arrangements of their homes. Accordingly on the morrow, choosing an hour when there could have been no preparation, I called at the lodgings of the first. I found the whole family assembled in the back kitchen, that served them for a parlour. As I entered the room the mother was busy at work, washing and dressing her children for the day. There stood six little things, so young that they seemed to be all about the same height, with their faces shining with the soap and water, and their cheeks burning red with the friction of the towel. They were all laughing and playing about the mother, who, with comb and brush in hand, found it no easy matter to get them to stand still while she made "the parting." First of all the man asked me to step up-stairs and see the sleeping-room. I was much struck with the scrupulous cleanliness of the apartment. The blind was as white as snow, half rolled up, and fastened with a pin. The floor was covered with patches of different coloured carpet, showing that they had been bought from time to time, and telling how difficult it had been to obtain the luxury. In one corner was a cupboard with the door taken off, the better to show all the tumblers, teacups, and coloured-glass mugs, that, with two decanters, well covered with painted flowers, were kept more for ornament than use. On the chimneypiece was a row of shells, china shepherdesses, and lambs, and a stuffed pet canary in a glass-case for a centre ornament. Against the wall, surrounded by other pictures, hung a half-crown water-colour drawing of the wife, with a child on her knee, matched on the other side by the husband's likeness, cut out in black paper. Pictures of bright-coloured ducks and a print of Father Moore the teetotaler completed the collection.

"You see," said the man, "we manages pretty well; but I can assure you we has a hard time of it to do it at all comfortably. Me and my wife is just as we stands—all our other things are in pawn. If I was to drink I don't know what I should do. How others manage is to me a mystery. This will show you I speak the truth," he added, and going to a secretary that stood against the wall he produced a handful of duplicates. There were seventeen tickets in all, amounting to 3*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*, the highest sum borrowed being 10*s.* "That'll show you I don't like my poverty to be known, or I should have told you of it before. And yet we manage to sleep clean;" and he pulled back the patchwork counterpane, and showed me the snow-white sheets beneath. "There's not enough clothes to keep us warm, but at least they are clean. We're obliged to give as much as we can to the children. Cleanliness is my wife's hobby, and I let her indulge in it. I can assure you last week my wife had to take the gown off her back to get 1*s.* on it. My little ones seldom have a bit of meat from one Sunday to another, and never a bit of butter."

I then descended into the parlour. The children were all seated on little stools that their father had made for them in his spare moments, and warming themselves round the fire, their little black shoes resting on the white hearth. From their regular features, small mouths, large black eyes, and fair skins, no one would have taken them for a labouring man's family. In answer to my questions, he said: "The eldest of them (a pretty little half-clad girl, seated in one corner) is ten, the next seven, that one five, that three, and this (a little thing perched upon a table near the mother) two. I've got all their ages in the Bible up-stairs." I remarked a strange look about one of the little girls. "Yes, she always suffered with that eye; and down at the hospital they lately performed an operation on it." An artificial pupil had been made.

The room was closed in from the passage by a rudely built partition. "That I did myself in my leisure," said the man; "it makes the room snugger." As he saw me looking at the clean rolling-pin and bright tins hung against the wall, he observed: "That's all my wife's doing. She has got them together by sometimes going without dinner herself, and laying out the 2*d.* or 3*d.* in things of that sort. That is how she manages. To-day she has got us a sheep's head and a few turnips for our Sunday's dinner," he added, taking off the lid of the boiling saucepan. Over the mantelpiece hung a picture of George IV., surrounded by four other frames. One of them contained merely three locks of hair. The man, laughing, told me, "Two of them are locks of myself and my wife, and the light one in the middle belonged to my wife's brother, who died in India. That's her doing again," he added.

After this I paid a visit to the other teetotaler at his home, and there saw one of his sons. He had six children altogether, and also supported his wife's mother. If it wasn't for him, the poor old thing, who was seventy-five, and a teetotaler too, must have gone to the workhouse. Three of his six children lived at home; the other three were out at service. One of the lads at home was a coal-backer. He was twenty-four years of age, and on an average could earn 17*s.* 6*d.* It was four years since he had taken to backing. He said, "I am at work at one of the worst wharfs in London; it is called 'the slaughter-house' by

the men, because the work is so excessive. The strongest man can only last twelve years at the work there; after that he is overstrained and of no use. I do the hardest work, and carry the coals up from the hold. The ladder I mount has about thirty-five steps, and stands very nearly straight on end. Each time I mount I carry on my back 238 pounds. No man can work at this for more than five days in the week. I work three days running, then have a day's rest, and then work two days more. I myself generally do five days' work out of the six. I never drink any beer, and have not for the last eight months. For three years and four months I took beer to get over the work. I used to have a pint at eleven, a pot at dinner, a pint at four o'clock, and double allowance, or a couple of pots, after work. Very often I had more than double allowance. I seldom in a day drank less than that; but I have done more. I have drunk five pots in four minutes and a-half. So my expenditure for beer was 1*s.* 4*d.* a-day regularly. Indeed, I used to allow myself three half-crowns to spend in beer a-week, Sundays included. When a coal-worker is in full work, he usually spends 2*s.* a-day, or 12*s.* a-week, in beer. The trade calls these men temperate. When they spend 15*s.* the trade think they are intemperate. Before I took the pledge I scarcely ever went to bed sober after my labour. I was not always drunk, but I was heavy and stupid with beer. Twice within the time I was a coalbacker I have been insensibly drunk. I should say three-fourths of the coalbackers are drunk twice a-week. Coalbacking is as heavy a class of labour as any performed. I don't know any that can beat it. I have been eight months doing the work, and can solemnly state I have never tasted a drop of fermented liquor. I have found I could do my work better and brisker than when I drank. I never feel thirsty over my work now; before, I was always dry, and felt as if I could never drink enough to quench it. Now I never drink from the time I go to work till the time I have my dinner; then my usual beverage is either cold coffee or oatmeal and water. From that time I never drink till I take my tea. On this system I find myself quite as strong as I did with the porter. When I drank porter it used to make me go along with a sack a little bit brisker for half-an-hour, but after that I was dead, and obliged to have some more. There are men at the wharf who drink beer and spirits that can do six days' labour in the week. I can't do this myself. I have done as much when I took fermented liquors, but I only did so by whipping myself up with stimulants. I was obliged to drink every hour a pint of beer to force me along. That was only working for the publican; for I had less money at the week's end than when I did less work. Now I can keep longer and more steadily at my work. In a month I would warrant to back more coals than a drunkard. I think the drunkard can do more for a short space of time than the teetotaler. I am satisfied the coalbackers as a class would be better off if they left off the drinking; and then masters would not force them to do so much work after dark as they do now. They always pay at public-houses. If that system was abandoned, the men would be greatly benefited by it. Drinking is not a necessity of the labour. All I want when I'm at work is a bit of coal in the mouth. This not only keeps the mouth cool, but as we go up the ladder we very often scrunch our teeth—the work's so hard. The coal keeps us from biting the tongue, that's one use; the other is, that by rolling it along in the mouth it excites the spittle, and it moistens the mouth. This I find a great deal better than a pot of porter."

In order to complete my investigations concerning the necessity of drinking in the coal-whipping trade, I had an interview with some of the more intelligent of the men who had been principally concerned in the passing of the Act that rescued the class from the "thraldom of the publican."

"I consider," said one, "that drink is not a necessity of our labour, but it is a necessity of the system under which we were formerly working. I have done the hardest work that any labouring man can do, and drank no fermented liquor. Nor do I consider fermented liquors to be necessary for the severest labour. This I can say of my own experience, having been a teetotaler for sixteen months. But if the working man don't have the drink, he must have good solid food, superior to what he is in the habit of having. A pot of coffee and a good beef dumpling will get one over the most severe labour. But if he can't have that he must have the stimulants. A pint of beer he can always have on credit, but he can't the beef dumpling. If there is an excuse for any persons drinking there is for the coalwhippers, for under the old system they were forced to become habitual drunkards to obtain work."

I also questioned another of the men, who had been a prime mover in obtaining the Act. He assured me, that before the "emancipation" of the men the universal belief of the coal-whippers, encouraged by the publicans, was, that it was impossible for them to work without liquor. In order to do away with that delusion, the three principal agents in procuring the Act became teetotalers of their own accord, and remained so, one for sixteen months and another for nine years, in order to prove to their fellow-workmen that drinking over their labour could be dispensed with, and that they might have "cool brains to fight through the work they had undertaken."

Another of the more intelligent men who had been a teetotaler:—"I performed the hardest labour I ever did, before or after, with more ease and satisfaction than ever I did under the drinking system. It is quite a delusion to believe that with proper nutriment the health declines under principles of total abstinence."

After this I was anxious to continue my investigations among the coalporters, and see whether the more intelligent among them were as firmly convinced as the better class of coalwhippers were, that intoxicating drinks were not necessary for the performance of hard labour. I endeavoured to find one of each class, pursuing the same plan as I had adopted with the coalwhippers: viz. I sought first, one who was so firmly convinced of the necessity of drinking fermented liquors during his work, that he had never been induced to abandon them; secondly, I endeavoured to obtain the evidence of one who had tried the principle of total abstinence and found it fail; and thirdly, I strove to procure the opinion of those who had been teetotalers for several years, and who could conscientiously state that no stimulant was necessary for the performance of their labour. Subjoined is the result of my investigations.

Concerning the motives and reasons for the great consumption of beer by the coalporters, I obtained the following statement from one of them:—"I've been all my life at coalporter-ing, off and on, and am now thirty-nine. For the last two years or so I've worked regularly as a filler to Mr. ——'s waggons. I couldn't do my work without a good allowance of beer. I can't afford so much now, as my family costs me more; but my regular allowance one time was three pots a-day. I have drank four pots, and always a glass of gin in the morning to keep out the cold air from the water. If I got off then for 7*s.* a-week for drink I reckoned it a cheap week. I can't do my work without my beer, and no coalporter can, properly. It's all nonsense talking about ginger-beer, or tea, or milk, or that sort of thing; what body is there in any of it? Many a time I might have been choked with coal-dust, if I hadn't had my beer to clear my throat with. I can't say that I'm particularly thirsty like next morning, after drinking three or four pots of beer to my own work, but I don't get drunk." He frequently, and with some emphasis, repeated the words, "But I don't get drunk." "You see, when you're at such hard work as ours, one's tired soon, and a drop of good beer puts new sap into a man. It oils his joints like. He can lift better and stir about brisker. I don't care much for beer when I'm quiet at home on a Sunday; it sets me to sleep then. I once tried to go without to please a master, and did work one day with only one half-pint. I went home as tired as a dog. I should have been soon good for nothing if I'd gone on that way—half-pinting in a day. Lord love you! we know a drop of good beer. The coalporters is admitted to be as good judges of beer as any men in London—maybe, the best judges; better than publicans. No salt and water will go down with us. It's no use a publican trying to gammon us with any of his cag-mag stuff. Salt and water for us! Sartainly, a drop of short (neat spirit) does one good in a cold morning like this; it's uncommon raw by the waterside, you see. Coalporters doesn't often catch cold—beer and gin keeps it out. Perhaps my beer and gin now cost me 5*s.* a-week, and that's a deal out of what I can earn. I dare say I earn 18*s.* a-week. Sometimes I may spend 6*s.* That's a third of my earnings, you say, and so it is; and as it's necessary for my work, isn't it a shame a poor man's pot of beer, and drop of gin, and pipe of tobacco, should be so dear? Taxes makes them dear. I can read, sir, and I understand these things. Beer—four pots a-day of it doesn't make me step unsteady. Hard work carries it off, and so one doesn't feel it that way. Beer's made of corn as well as bread, and so it stands to reason it's nourishing. Nothing'll persuade me it isn't. Let a teetotal gentleman try his hand at coal-work, and then he'll see if beer has no support in it. Too much is bad, I know, but a man can always tell how much he wants to help him on with his work. If beer didn't agree with me, of course I wouldn't drink it: but it does. Sartainly we drops into a beer-shop of a night, and does tipple a little when work's done; and the old women (our wives) comes for us, and they get a sup to soften them, and so they may get to like it overmuch, as you say, and one's bit of a house may go to rack and manger. I've a good wife myself, though. I know well enough all them things is bad—drunkenness is bad! All I ask for is a proper allowance at work; the rest is no good. I can't tell whether too much or no beer at coal-work would be best; perhaps none at all: leastways it would be safer. I shouldn't like to try either. Perhaps coalporters does get old sooner than other trades, and mayn't live so long; but that's their hard work, and it would be worse still without beer. But I don't get drunk."

I conversed with several men on the subject of their beer-drinking, but the foregoing is the only statement I met with where a coalporter could give any reason for his faith in the virtues of beer; and vague as in some points it may be, the other reasons I had to listen to were still vaguer. "Somehow we can't do without beer; it puts in the strength that the work takes out." "It's necessary for support." Such was the pith of every argument.

In order fully to carry out this inquiry, I obtained the address of a coalbacker from the ships, who worked hard and drank a good deal of beer, and who had the character of being an industrious man. I saw him in his own apartment, his wife being present while he made the following statement:—"I've worked at backing since I was twenty-four, and that's more than twelve years ago. I limit myself now, because times is not so good, to two pots of beer a-day; that is, when I'm all day at work. Some takes more. I reckon, that when times was better I drank fifteen pots a-week,

for I was in regular work, and middlin' well off. That's 780 pots, or 195 gallons a-year, you say. Like enough it may be. I never calculated, but it does seem a deal. It can't be done without, and men themselves is the best judges of what suits their work—I mean, of how much to take. I'll tell you what it is, sir. Our work's harder than people guess at, and one must rest sometimes. Now, if you sit down to rest without something to refresh you, the rest does you harm instead of good, for your joints seem to stiffen; but a good pull at a pot of beer backs up the rest, and we start lightsomer. Our work's very hard. I've worked till my head's ached like to split; and when I've got to bed, I've felt as if I've had the weight on my back still, and I've started awake when I fell off to sleep, feeling as if something was crushing my back flat to my chest. I can't say that I ever tried to do without beer altogether. If I was to think of such a thing, my old woman there would think I was out of my head." The wife assented. "I've often done with a little when work's been slackish. First, you see, we bring the coal up from the ship's hold. There, sometimes, it's dreadful hot, not a mouthful of air, and the coal-dust sometimes as thick as a fog. You breathe it into you, and your throat's like a flue, so that you must have something to drink. I fancy nothing quenches you like beer. We want a drink that tastes. Then there's the coals on your back to be carried up a nasty ladder, or some such contrivance, perhaps twenty feet, and a sack full of coals weighs 2 cwt. and a stone, at least; the sack itself's heavy and thick: isn't that a strain on a man? No horse could stand it long. Then, when you get fairly out of the ship, you go along planks to the waggon, and must look sharp, 'specially in slippery or wet weather, or you'll topple over, and then there's the hospital or the workhouse for you. Last week we carried along planks sixty feet, at least. There's nothing extra allowed for distance, but there ought to be. I've sweat to that degree in summer, that I've been tempted to jump into the Thames to cool myself. The sweat's run into my boots, and I've felt it running down me for hours as I had to trudge along. It makes men bleed at the nose and mouth, this work does. Sometimes we put a bit of coal in our mouths, to prevent our biting our tongues. I do, sometimes, but it's almost as bad as if you did bite your tongue, for when the strain comes heavier and heavier on you, you keep scrunching the coal to bits, and swallow some of it, and you're half choked; and then it's no use, you must have beer. Some's tried a bit of tobacco in their mouths, but that doesn't answer; it makes you spit, and often spit blood. I know I can't do without beer. I don't think they 'dulterate it for us; they may for fine people, that just tastes it, and, I've heard, has wine and things. But we must have it good, and a publican knows who's good customers. Perhaps a bit of good grub might be as good as beer to strengthen you at work, but the straining and sweating makes you thirsty, more than hungry; and if poor men must work so hard, and for so little, for rich men, why poor men will take what they feel will satisfy them, and run the risk of its doing them good or harm; and that's just where it is. I can't work three days running now without feeling it dreadful. I get a mate that's fresher to finish my work. I'd rather earn less at a trade that would give a man a chance of some ease, but all trades is overstocked. You see we have a niceish tidy room here, and a few middling sticks, so I can't be a drunkard."

I now give the statement of a coalporter who had been a teetotaler:—"I have been twenty-two years a coalheaver. When I began that work I earned 50*s.* a-week as backer and filler. I am now earning, one week with another, say 15*s.* We have no sick fund among us—no society of any sort—no club—no schools—no nothing. We had a kind of union among us before the great strike, more than fourteen years back, but it was just for the strike. We struck against masters lowering the pay for a ton to 2¼*d.* from 2½*d.* The strike only lasted two or three weeks, and the men were forced to give way; they didn't all give way at once, but came to gradual. One can't see one's wife and children without bread. There's very few teetotalers among us, though there's not many of us now that can be called drunken—they can't get it, sir. I was a teetotaler myself for two years, till I couldn't keep to it any longer. We all break. It's a few years back, I forget zactly when. At that time teetotalers might drink shrub, but that never did me no good; a good cup of tea freshened me more. I used then to drink ginger-beer, and spruce, and tea, and coffee. I've paid as much as 5*s.* a-week for ginger-beer. When I teetotaled, I always felt thirsty. I used to long for a drink of beer, but somehow managed to get past a public-house, until I could stand it no longer. A clerk of ours broke first, and I followed him. I certainly felt weaker before I went back to my beer; now I drink a pint or two as I find I want it. I can't do without it, so it's no use trying. I joined because I felt I was getting racketty, and giving my mind to nothing but drink, instead of looking to my house. There may be a few teetotalers among us, but I think not. I only knew two. We all break—we can't keep it. One of these broke, and the other kept it, because, if he breaks, his wife'll break, and they were both regular drunkards. A coalporter's worn out before what you may call well old. There's not very old men among us. A man's done up at fifty, and seldom lives long after, if he has to keep on at coalportering. I wish we had some sick fund, or something of that kind. If I was laid up now, there would be nothing but the parish for me, my wife, and four childer (here the poor man spoke in a broken voice). The masters often discharge old hands when they get feeble, and put on boys. We have no coals allowed for our own firesides. Some masters, if we buys of them, charges us full price, others a little cheaper."

I saw this man in the evening, after he had left his work, in his own room. It was a large and airy garret. His wife, who did not know previously of my visit, had in her domestic arrangements manifested a desire common to the better disposed of the wives of the labourers, or the poor—that of trying to make her "bit of place" look comfortable. She had to tend a baby four months old; two elder children were ill clad, but clean; the eldest boy, who is fifteen, is in the summer employed on a river steamboat, and is then of great help to his parents. There were two beds in the room, and the bedding was decently arranged so as to form a bundle, while its scantiness or worn condition was thus concealed. The solitary table had a faded green cloth cover, very threadbare, but still a cover. There were a few cheap prints over the mantelshelf, and the best description I can give is, in a phrase not uncommon among the poor, that the whole was an attempt to "appear decent." The woman spoke well of her husband, who was kind to her, and fond of his home, and never drank on Sundays.

Last of all, I obtained an interview with two coalporters who had been teetotalers for some years:—

"I have been a coalporter ever since I have been able to carry coals," said one. "I began at sixteen. I have been a backer all the time. I have been a teetotaler eight years on the 10th of next March. My average earnings where I am now is about 35*s.* per week. At some wharfs work is very bad, and the men don't average half that. They were paid every night where I worked last, and sometimes I have gone home with 2½*d.* Take one with the other, I should say the coalporter's earnings average about 1*l.* a-week. My present place is about as good a berth as there is along the waterside. There is only one gang of us, and we do as much work as two will do in many wharfs. Before I was a teetotaler, I principally drank ale. I judged that the more I gave for my drink, the better it was. Upon an average, I used to drink from three to four pints of ale per day. I used to drink a good drop of gin, too. The coalporters are very partial to 'dog's nose'—that is, half a pint of ale with a pennyworth of gin in it; and when they have got the money, they go up to what they term 'the lucky shop' for it. The coalporters take this every morning through the week, when they can afford it. After my work, I used to drink more than when I was at it. I used to sit as long as the house would let me have any. Upon an average, I should say I used to take three or four pints more of an evening; so that, altogether, I think I may fairly say I drank my four pots of ale regularly every day, and about half a pint of dog's nose. I reckon my drink used to cost me 13*s.* a-week when I was at work. At times I was a drunken, noisy gentleman then."

Another coalporter, who has been a teetaler ten years on the 25th of last August, told me, that before he took the pledge he used to drink a great deal after he had done his work, but while he was at work he could not stand it. "I don't think I used to drink above three pints and a half and a pennyworth of gin in the daytime," said this man. "Of an evening I used to stop at the public-house, generally till I was drunk and unfit to work in the morning. I will vouch for it I used to take about three pots a-day after I had done work. My reckoning used to come to about 1*s.* 8*d.* a-day, or, including Sundays, about 10*s.* 6*d.* per week. At that time I could average all the year round about 30*s.* a-week, and I used to drink away 10*s.* of it regularly. I did, indeed, sir, more to my shame."

The other coalporter told me his earnings averaged about the same, but he drank more.

"I should say I got rid of nearly one-half of my money. I did like the beer then: I thought I could not live without it. It's between twelve and thirteen years since the first coalporter signed the pledge. His name was John Sturge, and he was looked upon as a madman. I looked upon him myself in that light. The next was Thomas Bailey, and he was my teetotal father. When I first heard of a coalporter doing without beer, I thought it a thing impossible. I made sure they wouldn't live long; it was part of my education to believe they couldn't. My grandfather brewed home-brewed beer, and he used to say to me, 'Drink, my lad, it'll make thee strong.' The coalporters say now, if we could get the genuine home-brewed, that would be the stuff to do us good; the publican's wash is no good. I drank for strength; the stimulation caused by the alcohol I mistook for my own power."

"Richard Hooper! He's been a teetotaler now about twelve years. He was the fourth of the coaleys as signed the pledge, and he first instilled teetotalism on my mind," said the other man. "Where he works now there's nine out of fifteen men is teetotalers. Seeing that he could do his work much better than when he drinked beer, induced me to become one. He was more regular in his work after he had given it up than whenever I knowed him before."

"The way in which Thomas Bailey put it into my head was this here," continued the other. "He invited me to a meeting: I told him I would come, but he'd never make a teetotaler of me, I knowed. I went with the intention to listen to what they could have to say. I was a little bit curious to know how they could make out that beer was no good for a body. The first man that addressed the meeting was a tailor. I thought

it might do very well for him; but then, says I, if you had the weight of 238lbs. of coals on your back, my lad, you couldn't do it without ale or beer. I thought this here, because I was taught to believe I couldn't do without it. I cared not what any man said about beer, I believed it was life itself. After the tailor a coalporter got up to speak. Then I began to listen more attentively. The man said he once had a happy home and a happy wife, everything the heart could wish for, but through the intoxicating drinks he had been robbed of everything. The man pictured the drunkard's home so faithfully, that the arrows of conviction stuck fast in my heart, and my conscience said, Thou art a drunkard, too! The coalporter said his home had been made happy through the principle of total abstinence. I was determined to try it from that hour. My home was as miserable as it possibly could be, and I knowed intoxicating drink was the cause on it. I signed the pledge that night after the coalporter was done speaking, but was many months before I was thoroughly convinced I was doing right in abstaining altogether. I kept thinking on it after going home of a night, tired and fatigued with my hard work, some times scarcely able to get up-stairs through being so overwrought; and not being quite satisfied about it, I took every opportunity to hear lectures upon the subject. I heard one on the properties of intoxicating drinks, which quite convinced me that I had been labouring under a delusion. The gentleman analysed the beer in my presence, and I saw that in a pint of it there was 14 ozs. of water that I had been paying 2*d.* for, 1 oz. of alcohol, and 1 oz. of what they call nutritious matter, but which is the filthiest stuff man ever set eyes upon. It looked more like cobblers' wax than anything else. It was what the lecturer called the—residyum, I think was the name he gave it. The alcohol is what stimulates a man, and makes him feel as if he could carry two sacks of coal while it lasts, but afterwards comes the depression; that's what the coalporters call the 'blues.' And then he feels that he can do no work at all, and he either goes home and puts another man on in his place, or else he goes and works it off with more drink. You see, where we coalporters have been mistaken is believing alcohol was nutriment, and in fancying that a stimulant was strength. Alcohol is nothing strengthening to the body—indeed, it hardens the food in the stomach, and so hinders digestion. You can see as much any day if you go into the hospitals, and look at the different parts of animals preserved in spirits. The strength that alcohol gives is unnatural and false. It's food only that can give real strength to the frame. I have done more work since I've been a teetotaler in my eight years than I did in my ten or twelve years before. I have felt stronger. I don't say that I do my work better, but this I will say, without any fear of contradiction, that I do my work with more ease to myself, and with more satisfaction to my employer, since I have given over intoxicating drinks. I scarcely know what thirst is. Before I took the pledge I was always dry, and the mere shadow of the potboy was quite sufficient to convince me that I wanted something. I certainly haven't felt weaker since I left off malt liquor. I have eaten more and drank less. I live as well now as any of the publicans do, and who has a better right to do so than the man who works? I have backed as many as sixty tons in a day since I took the pledge, and have done it without any intoxicating drink, with perfect ease to myself, and walked five miles to a temperance meeting afterwards. But before I became a teetotaler, after the same amount of work, I should scarcely have been able to crawl home; I should have been certain to have lost the next day's work at least: but now I can back that quantity of coals week after week without losing a day. I've got a family of six children under twelve years of age. My wife's a teetotaler, and has suckled four children upon the principle of total abstinence. Teetotalism has made my home quite happy, and what I get goes twice as far. Where I work now, four out of five of us are teetotalers. I am quite satisfied that the heaviest work that a man can possibly do may be done without a drop of fermented liquor. I say so from my own experience. All kind of intoxicating drinks is quite a delusion. They are the cause of the working man's wages being lowered. Masters can get the men who drink at their own price. If it wasn't for the money spent in liquor we should have funds to fall back upon, and then we could stand out against any reduction that the masters might want to put upon us, and could command a fair day's wages for a fair day's work: but as it is, the men are all beggars, and must take what the master offers them. The backing of coals out of the holds of ships is man-killing work. It's scandalous that men should be allowed to force their fellow-men to do such labour. The calves of a man's leg is as hard as a bit of board after that there straining work; they hardly know how to turn out of bed of a morning after they have been at that for a day. I never worked below bridge, thank God! and I hope I never shall. I've not wanted for a day's work since I've been a teetotaler. Men can back out of a ship's hold better without liquor than with it. We teetotalers can do the work better—that is, with more ease to ourselves—than the drinking men. Many teetotalers have backed coals out of the hold, and I have heard them say over and over again that they did their work with more comfort and ease than they did when they drank intoxicating drink. Coal-backing from the ship's hold is the hardest work that it is possible for a man to do.

Going up a ladder 16 feet high with 238 lbs. weight on a man's back is sufficient to kill any one; indeed, it does kill the men in a few years, they're soon old men at that work: and I do say that the masters below bridge should be stopped going on as they're doing now. And what for? Why, to put the money they save by it into their own pockets, for the public ain't no better off, the coals is just as dear. Then the whippers and lightermen are all thrown out of work by it; and what's more, the lives of the backers are shortened many years—we reckon at least ten years."

"I wish to say this much," said the other teetotaler: "it's a practice with some of the coal-merchants to pay their men in public-houses, and this is the chief cause of a great portion of the wages being spent in drink. I once worked for a master upon Bankside as paid his men at a public-house, and I worked a week there, which yearned me 28*s.* and some odd halfpence. When I went on Saturday night the publican asked me what I was come for. In reply, I said 'I'm come to settle.' He said, 'You're already settled with,' meaning I had nothing to take. I had drinked all my lot away, he said, with the exception of 5*s.* I had borrowed during the week. Then I told him to look back, and he'd find I'd something due to me. He did so, and said there was a halfpenny. I had nothing to take home to my wife and two children. I asked the publican to lend me a few shillings, saying my young un's had nothing to eat. His reply was, 'That's nothing to me, that's your business.' After that I made it my business. While I stood at the bar in came the three teetotalers, and picked up the 28*s.* each that was coming to them, and I thought how much better they was off than me. The publican stopped all my money for drink that I knowed I'd not had, and yet I couldn't help myself, 'cause he had the paying on me. Then something came over me as I stood there, and I said, 'From this night, with the help of God, I'll never taste of another drop of intoxicating liquors.' That's ten years ago the 25th of last August, and I've kept my pledge ever since, thank God! That publican has been the making of me. The master what discharged me before for getting drunk, when he heard that I was sober sent for me back again. But before that, the three teetotalers who was a working along with me was discharged by their master, to oblige the publican who stopped my money. The publican, you see, had his coals from the wharf. He was a 'brass-plate coal-merchant' as well as a publican, and had private customers of his own. He threatened to take his work away from the wharf if the three teetotalers wasn't discharged; and sure enough the master did discharge them, sooner than lose so good a customer. Many of the masters now are growing favourable to teetotalism. I can say that I've done more on the principle of total abstinence than ever I done before. I'm better in health, I've no trembling when I goes to my work of a morning; but, on the contrary, I'm ready to meet it. I'm happier at home. We never has no angry words now," said the man, with a shake of the head, and a strong emphasis on the *now*. "My children never runs away from me as they used to before; they come and embrace me more. My money now goes for eatables and clothes, what I and my children once was deprived on through my intemperate habits. And I bless God and the publican that made me a teetotaler—that I do sincerely—every night as I go to bed. And as for men to hold out that they can't do their work without it, I'm prepared to prove that we have done more work without it than ever we have done or could do with it."

I have been requested by the coalwhippers to publish the following expression of gratitude on their part towards the Government for the establishment of the Coalwhippers' Office:—

"The change that the Legislature has produced in us, by putting an end to the thraldom of the publican by the institution of this office, we wish it to be generally known that we and our wives and children are very thankful for."

I shall now conclude with the following estimate of the number of the hands, ships, &c. engaged in the coal trade in London.

There are about 400 wharfs, I am informed, from Wapping to Chelsea, as well as those on the City-canal. A large wharf will keep about 50 horses, 6 waggons, and 4 carts; and it will employ constantly from 3 to 4 gangs of 5 men. Besides these, there will be 6 waggoners, 1 cart-carman, and about 2 trouncers—in all, from 24 to 29 men. A small wharf will employ 1 gang of 5 men, about 10 horses, 3 waggons, and 1 cart, 3 waggoners, 1 trouncer, and 1 cart-carman. At the time of the strike, sixteen years ago, there were more than 3000 coalporters, I am told, in London. It is supposed that there is an average of 1½ gang, or about 7 men employed in each wharf; or, in all, 2000 coalporters in constant employment, and about 200 and odd men out of work. There are in the trade about 4 waggons and 1 cart to each wharf, or 1600 waggons and 400 carts, having 5200 horses; to these there would be about 3 waggoners and 1 cart-carman upon an average to each wharf, or 1600 in all. Each wharf would occupy about 2 trouncers, or 900 in the whole.

Hence the statistics of the coal trade will be as follows:—

	No.
Ships	2,177
Seamen	21,600
Tons of coal entering the Port of London each year . .	3,418,140
Coalmeters	170

	No.
Coalwhippers	2,000
Coalporters	3,000
Coalfactors	25
Coalmerchants	502
Coaldealers	295
Coal waggons	1,600
Horses for ditto	5,200
Waggoners	1,600
Trimmers	800

I continue my inquiry into the state of the coal-labourers of the metropolis.

The coalheavers, properly so called, are now no longer known in the trade. The class of coalheavers, according to the vulgar acceptation of the word, is divided into coalwhippers, or those who whip up or lift the coals rapidly from the hold, and the coalbackers, or those who carry them on their backs to the wharf, either from the hold of the ship moored alongside the wharf, or from the lighter into which the coals have been whipped from the collier moored in the middle of the river, or "Pool." Formerly the coals were delivered from the holds of the ships by the labourers shovelling them on to a series of stages, raised one above the other till they ultimately reached the deck. One or two men were on each stage, and hove the coals up to the stage immediately above them. The labourers engaged in this process were termed "coalheavers." But now the coals are delivered at once from the hold by means of a sudden jerk, which "whips" them on deck. This is the process of coalwhipping, and it is performed chiefly in the middle of the river, to fill the "rooms" of the barges that carry the coals from the ship to the wharf. Coals are occasionally delivered immediately from the ship on to the wharf by means of the process of "coalbacking," as it is called. This consists in the sacks being filled in the hold, and then carried on the men's backs up a ladder from the hold, along planks from the ship to the wharf. By this means, it will be easily understood that the ordinary processes of whipping and lightering are avoided. By the process of coalwhipping, the ship is delivered in the middle of the river, or the "Pool" as it is called, and the coals are lightered, or carried to the wharf, by means of barges, whence they are transported to the wharf by the process of backing. But when the coals are backed out of the ship itself on to the wharf, the two preliminary processes are done away with. The ship is moored alongside, and the coals are delivered directly from the ships to the premises of the wharfinger. By this means the wharfingers, or coalmerchants, below bridge, are enabled to have their coals delivered at a cheaper price than those above bridge, who must receive the cargoes by means of the barges. I am assured that the colliers, in being moored alongside the wharfs, receive considerable damage, and strain their timbers severely from the swell of the steamboats passing to and fro. Again, the process of coalbacking appears to be of so extremely laborious a nature that the health, and indeed the lives, of the men are both greatly injured by it. Moreover, the benefit remains solely with the merchant, and not with the consumer, for the price of the coals delivered below bridge is the same as those delivered above. The expense of delivering the ship is always borne by the shipowner. This is, at present, 8*d.* per ton, and was originally intended to be given to the whippers. But the merchant, by the process of backing, has discovered the means of avoiding this process; and so he puts the money which was originally paid by the shipowner for whipping the coals into his own pocket, for the consumer is not a commensurate gainer. Since the merchant below bridge charges the same price to the public for his coals as the merchant above, it is clear that he alone is benefited at the expense of the public, the coalwhippers, and even the coalbackers themselves; for on inquiry among this latter class, I find that they object as much as the whippers to the delivery of a ship from the hold, the mounting of the ladders from the hold being of a most laborious and injurious nature. I have been supplied by a gentleman who is intimately acquainted with the expenses of the two processes with the following comparative account:—

Expenses of delivering a Ship of 360 *tons by the process of Coalwhipping.*

	£	s.	d.
For whipping 360 tons at 8*d.* per ton	12	0	0
Lighterman's wages for 1 week engaged in lightering the said 360 tons from ship to wharf	1	10	0
Expenses of backing the said coals from craft to wharf at 11½*d.* per ton	16	17	6
	£30	7	6

Expense of delivering a Ship of 360 *tons by the process of Coalbacking.*

For backing a ship of 360 tons directly from the ship to the wharf	£16	17	6

By the above account it will be seen, that if a collier of 360 tons is delivered in the Pool, the expense is 30*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*, but if delivered at the wharf-side the expense is 16*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*, the difference between the two processes being 13*l.* 10*s.* Hence, if the consumer were the gainer, the coals should be delivered below bridge 9*d.* a ton cheaper than they are above bridge. The nine coalwhippers ordinarily engaged in the whipping of the coals would have gained 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* each man if they had not been "backed" out of the ship; but as the coals delivered by backing below bridge are not cheaper, and the whippers have not received any money, it follows that the 12*l.* which has been paid by the shipowner to the merchant for the expense of whipping has been pocketed by the merchant, and the expense of lightering, 1*l.* 10*s.*, saved by him; making a total profit of 13*l.* 10*s.*, not to mention the cost of wear and tear, and interest of capital sunk in barges. This sum of money is made at the expense of the coalbackers themselves, who are seldom able to continue the labour (so extreme is it) for more than twenty years at the outside, the average duration of the labourers being only twelve years. After this period, the men, from having been overstrained by their violent exertion, are unable to pursue any other calling; and yet the merchants, I am sorry to say, have not even encouraged them to form either a benefit society, a superannuation fund, or a school for their children.

Wishing to perfect the inquiry, I thought it better to see one of the seamen engaged in the trade. Accordingly, I went off to some of the colliers lying in Mill Hole, and found an intelligent man, ready to give me the information I sought. His statement was, that he had been to sea between twenty-six and twenty-seven years altogether. "Out of that time," he said, "I've had nine or ten years' experience at the coal-trade. I've been to the East Indies and West Indies, and served my apprenticeship in a whaler. I have been to the Mediterranean, and to several parts of France. I think that, take the general run, the living and treatment of the men in the coal-trade is better than in any other going. It's difficult to tell how many ships I've been in, and how many owners I've served under. I have been in the same ship for three or four years, and I have been only one voyage in one ship. You see, we are obliged to study our own interest as much as we can. Of course the masters won't do it for us. Speaking generally, of the different ships and different owners I've served under, I think the men are generally well served. I have been in some that have been very badly victualled: the small stores in particular, such as tea, sugar, and coffee, have been very bad. They, in general, nip us very short. There is a regular allowance fixed by Act of Parliament; but it's too little for a man to go by. Some owners go strictly by the Act, and some give more; but I don't know one that gives under. Indeed, as a general rule, I think the men in the trade have nothing to complain of. The only thing is, the wages are generally small; and the ships are badly manned. In bad weather there is not enough hands to take the sail off her, or else there wouldn't be so many accidents as there are. The average tonnage of a coal-ship is from 60 up to about 250 tons. There are sometimes large ships; but they come seldom, and when they do, they carry but part coal cargo. They only load a portion with coals that they may be able to come across the bar-harbours in the north. If they were loaded altogether with coals, they couldn't get over the bar: they would draw too much water. For a ship of about from 100 to 130 tons, the usual complement is generally from five to six hands, boys, captain, and men all included together. There might be two men before the mast—a master, a mate, and a boy. This is sadly too little. A ship of this sort shouldn't, to my mind, have less than seven hands: that is the least to be safe. In rough weather, you see, perhaps the ship is letting water: the master takes the 'hellum,' one hand, in general, stops on deck to work the pumps, and three goes aloft. Most likely one of the boys has only been to sea one or two voyages; and if there's six hands to such a ship, two of them is sure to be 'green-boys,' just fresh from the shore, and of little or no use to us. We haven't help enough to get the sail off the yards in time,—there's no one on deck looking out,—it may be thick weather,—and, of course, it's properly dangerous. About half the accidents at sea occur from the ships being badly manned. The ships generally, throughout the coal-trade, have one hand in six too little. The colliers, mostly, carry double their registered tonnage. A ship of 250 tons carrying 500, will have ten hands, when she ought to have twelve or thirteen; and out of the ten that she does have, perhaps four of them is boys. All sailors in the coal-trade are paid by the voyage. They vary from 3*l.* 10*s.* up to 4*l.* for able-bodied seamen. The ships from the same port in the north give all alike for a London journey. In the height of summer, the wages is from 3*l.* 5*s.* to 3*l.* 15*s.*; and in the winter they are 4*l.* Them's the highest wages given this winter. The wages are increased in the winter, because the work's harder and the weather's colder. Some of the ships lay up, and there's a greater demand for those that are in the trade. It's true that the seamen of those that are laying up are out of employ; but I can't say why it is that the wages don't come down in consequence. All I know is they go up in the winter. This is sadly too little pay, this 4*l.* a journey. Probably, in the winter, a man may make only two journeys in four months; and if he's got a wife and family, his expenses is going on at home all the while. The voyage I consider to last from the time of sailing from the north port, to the time of entering the north port again. The average time of coming from the north port to London is from ten to eleven days. Sometimes the passage has been done in six: but I'm speaking of the average. We are generally about twenty-two days at sea, making the voyage from the north and back. The rest of the time we are discharging cargo, or lying idle in the Pool. On making the port of London, we have to remain in 'the Section' till the cargo is sold. 'The Section' is between Woolwich and Gravesend. I have remained there as much as five weeks. I have

been there, too, only one market-day—that is, three days. It is very seldom this occurs. The average time that we remain in 'the Section' is from two to three weeks. The cause of this delay arises from the factors not disposing of the coals, in order to keep up the prices. If a large fleet comes, the factors will not sell immediately, because the prices would go down; so we are kept in 'the Section,' for their convenience, without no more wages. When the cargo is sold we drop down into the Pool; and there we remain about two days more than we ought, for want of a meter. We are often kept, also, a day over the day of delivery. This we call a 'balk day.' The owners of the ship receive a certain compensation for every one of these balk days. This is expressed in the charter-party, or ship's contract. The whippers and meters, too, receive a certain sum for these balk days, the same as if they were working; but the seamen of the colliers are the only parties who receive nothing. The delay arises entirely through the merchant, and he ought to pay us for it. The coal-trade is the only trade that pays by the voyage; all others paying by the month: and the seamen feel it as a great grievance, this detention not being paid for. Very often, while I have been laying in 'the Section,' because the coalfactor would not sell, other seamen that entered the port of London with me have made another voyage and been back again, whilst I was stopping idle; and been been 3*l.* 10*s.*, or 4*l.*, the better for it. Four or five years since the voyage was 1*l.* or 2*l.* better paid for. I have had, myself, as much as 6*l.* the voyage, and been detained much less. Within the last three years our wages have decreased 30 per cent, whilst the demand for coals and for colliers has increased considerably. I never heard of such a thing as supply and demand; but it does seem to me a very queer thing that, whilst there's a greater quantity of coals sold, and more colliers employed, we poor seamen should be paid worse. In all the ships that I have been in, I've generally been pretty well fed; but I have been aboard some ships, and heard of a great many more, where the food is very bad, and the men are very badly used. On the passage, the general rule is to feed the men upon salt meat. The pork they in general use is Kentucky, Russian, Irish, and, indeed, a mixture of all nations. Any kind of offal goes aboard some ships; but the one I'm on now there's as good meat as ever went aboard; aye, and plenty of it—no stint."

A basketman, who was present whilst I was taking the above statement, told me that the foreman of the coalwhippers had more chances of judging of the state of the provisions supplied to the colliers than the men had themselves; for the basketmen delivered many different ships, and it was the general rule for them to get their dinner aboard, among the sailors. The basketman here referred to told me that he had been a butcher, and was consequently well able to judge of the quality of the meat. "I have no hesitation," said he, "in stating, that one half the meat supplied to the seamen is unfit for human consumption. I speak of the pork in particular. Frequently the men throw it overboard to get it out of the way. Many a time when I've been dining with the men I wouldn't touch it. It fairly and regularly stinks as they takes it out of the coppers."

The Coalmeters.

I now come to the class called Coalmeters. These, though belonging to the class of "clerks," rather than labourers, still form so important a link in the chain, that I think it best to give a description of their duty here.

The coalmeters weigh the coals on board ship. They are employed by a committee of coalfactors and coalmerchants—nine factors and nine merchants forming such committee. The committee is elected by the trade. They go out every year, and consequently two new members are elected annually. They have the entire patronage of the meter's office. No person can be an official coalmeter without being appointed by the coal-committee. There were formerly several bye-meters, chosen by the merchants from among their own men, as they pleased. This practice has been greatly diminished since April last. The office of the coalmeter is to weigh out the ship's cargo, as a middle-man between the factor and the merchant. The cargo is consigned by the pit-owner or the shipowner to the coalfactor. The number of coalfactors is about twenty-five. These men dispose of all the coals that are sold in London. As soon as the ship arrives at Gravesend, her papers are transmitted to an office appointed for that purpose, and the factor then proceeds to the Coal Exchange to sell them. Here the merchants and the factors assemble three times a-week. The purchasers are divided into large and small buyers. Large buyers consist of the higher class coalmerchants, and they will sometimes buy as many as three or four thousand tons in a-day. The small buyers only purchase by multiples of seven—either fourteen, twenty-one, or twenty-eight tons, as they please. The rule of the market is, that the buyers pay one half of the purchase-money the first market-day after the ship is cleared, and for the remainder a bill at six weeks is given. After the ship is sold she is admitted from the Section into the Pool, and a meter is appointed to her from the coalmeter's office. This office is maintained by the committee of factors and merchants, and the masters appointed by them are registered there. According as a fresh ship is sold, the next meter in rotation is sent down to her. There are in all 170 official meters, divided into three classes, called respectively "placemen," "extra men," and "supernumeraries." The placeman has the preference of the work. If there is more than the placeman can do the extra man takes it, and if both classes are occupied then the supernumerary steps in. Should the earnings of the latter class not amount to 25*s.* weekly, that sum is made up to them. Before "breaking bulk," that is, before beginning to work the cargo of the ship, the City dues must, under a penalty, be paid by the factor. These amount to 1*s.* 1*d.* per ton. The 1*s.* goes to the City, and the 1*d.* to the Government. Formerly the whole of the dues went to the City, but within a short period the odd 1*d.* has been claimed by Government. The coal dues form one of the principal revenues of the city. The dues are collected by the clerk of the Coal Exchange. All the harbour dues and light dues are paid by the shipowner. After the City dues have been paid, the meter receives his papers and goes on board to deliver the cargo, and see that each buyer registered on the paper gets his proper complement. The meter's hours of attendance are from seven to four in winter, and from seven to five in summer. The meter has to wait on board the ship until such time as the purchasers send craft to receive their coals. He then weighs them previously to their delivery into the barge. There are eight weighs to the ton. The rate of payment to the meter is 1½*d.* per ton, and the merchant is compelled to deliver the cargo at the rate of forty-nine tons per day, making the meter's wages amount to 6*s.* 1½*d.* per day. If there is a necessity or demand for more coals, we can do double that amount of work. On the shortest day in the year we can do ninety-eight tons." One whom I saw said, "I myself have done 112 tons to-day. That would make my earnings to-day 15*s.*, but as I did nothing on Saturday, of course that reduces them one half."

Upon an average, a place-meter is employed about five days in the week. An extra meter is employed about four days in the week, and a supernumerary about half his time, but he has always his 25*s.* weekly secured to him, whether employed or not. Two pounds a-week would be a very fair average for the wages of a place-meter, since the reduction on the 1st of April. Many declare they don't earn 36*s.* a-week, but many do more. The extra man gets very nearly the same money as the place-man, under the present arrangement. The supernumerary generally makes his 30*s.* weekly. As the system at present stands, the earnings of the meters generally are not so much as those of superior mechanics. It is an office requiring interest to obtain it: a man must be of known integrity; thousands and thousands of pounds of property pass through his hands, and he is the man appointed to see justice between factor and merchant. Before the Act directing all coals to be sold by weight, the meter measured them in a vat, holding a quarter of a chaldron.

In those days a first-class meter could reckon upon an income of from 400*l.* to 500*l.* a-year, and the lowest salary was not under 300*l.* per annum. The meter's office was then entirely a city appointment, and none but those of considerable influence could obtain it. This system was altered eighteen years ago, when the meter's office was placed in the hands of a committee of coalfactors and coalmerchants. Immediately after this time the salaries decreased. The committee first agreed to pay the meters at the rate of 2*d.* per ton, undertaking that that sum should produce the place-meter an income of 120*l.* One gentleman assured me that he never exceeded 114*l.*, but then he was one of the juniors. Under the old system the meters were paid at a rate that would have been equivalent to 3*d.* a ton under the present one. In the year 1831 the salary was reduced to 2*d.*, and on the 1st of April in the present year, the payment has again been cut down to 1½*d.* per ton. Besides this, the certificate money, which was 2*s.* per ship, and generally amounted to 30*s.* per quarter, was entirely disallowed, making the total last reduction of their wages amount to full 30 per cent. No corresponding reduction has taken place in the price of coals to the consumer. At the same time the price of whipping has been reduced 1*d.* per ton, so that, within the last year, the combined factors and merchants have lowered the price of delivery 1½*d.* per ton, and they (the merchants and factors) have been the sole gainers thereby. This has been done, too, while the demand for coals has been increasing every year. Now, according to the returns of the clerk of the Coal Exchange, there were 3,418,340 tons of coals delivered in the port of London in the year 1848, and assuming the amount to have remained the same in the present year, it follows that the factors and merchants have gained no less than 21,364*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* per annum, and that out of the earnings of the meters and the whippers.

The coalwhippers, already described, whip the coals by means of a basket and tackle from the hold to the deck of the ship. The coalmeters weigh the coals when so whipped from the hold, previously to their being delivered into the barge alongside. The "coal-backer" properly carries the coals in sacks upon his back from the barges, when they have reached the premises of the coal-merchants, on to the wharfs.

I will now proceed to speak of

The Coalporters.

Coalporters are employed in filling the waggons of the merchants at their respective wharfs, and in conveying and delivering the coal at the residence of the customers. Their distinguishing dress is a fantail hat, and an outer garment—half smock-frock and half jacket—heavy and black with coal-dust: this

garment is often left open at the breast, especially, I am told, on a Monday, when the porter generally has a clean shirt to display. The narrative I give, will show how the labour of these men is divided. The men themselves have many terms for the same employment. The man who drives the waggon I heard styled indifferently, the "waggoner," "carman," or "shooter." The man who accompanies him to aid in the delivery of the coals was described to me as the "trimmer," "trouncer," or "pull-back." There are also the "scurfs" and the "sifters," of whom a description will be given presently. The coalporters form a rude class; not, perhaps, from their manners being ruder than those of other classes of labourers, whose labour cannot be specified under the description of "skilled," (it is, indeed, but the exertion of animal strength—the work of thew and muscle), but from their being less educated. I was informed that not one man in six—the manager in a very large house in the coal-trade estimated it at but one in eight—could read or write, however imperfectly. As a body, they have no fellowship or "union" among themselves, no general sick fund, no organization in rules for their guidance as an important branch (numerically) of an important traffic; indeed, as it was described to me by one of the class, "no nothing." The coalporters thus present a striking contrast to the coalwhippers, who, out of means not exceeding those of the porters, have done so much for the sick among them, and for the instruction of their children. The number of men belonging to the Benefit Society of Coalwhippers is 436; and there are about 200 coalwhippers belonging to another society, that was instituted before the new office. There are 200 more in connexion with other offices. There were 130 sick men relieved by the Coalwhippers' Society last year. There were 14 deaths out of the 436 members. Each sick man receives 10*s.* a-week, and on death there is a payment of 5*l.* a man, and 3*l.* in the case of a wife. The amount of subscription to the fund is 3*d.* per week under forty years of age, 4*d.* to fifty, 5*d.* to sixty, and above that, 6*d.* On account of the want of any organization among the coalporters, it is not easy to get at their numbers with accuracy. No apprenticeship is necessary for the coalporter, no instruction even; so long as he can handle a shovel, or lift a sack of coals with tolerable celerity, he is perfect in his calling. The concurrent testimony of the best-informed parties, gave me the number of the porters (exclusive of those known as sifters, scurfs, or odd men,) as 1500; that is, 1500 employed thus: in large establishments on "the waterside," five men are employed as backers and fillers—two to fill the sacks, and three to carry them on their backs from the barge to the waggon, (in smaller establishments there are only two to carry). There are two more then employed to conduct the load of coal to the residence of the purchaser—the waggoner (or carman), and the trimmer (or trouncer). Of these the waggoner is considered the picked man, for he is expected to be able to write his name. Sometimes he can write nothing else, and more frequently not even so much, carrying his name on the customer's ticket ready written; and he has the care of the horses as driver, and frequently as groom.

At one time, when their earnings were considerable, these coalporters spent large sums in drink. Now their means are limited, and their drunkenness is not in excess. The men, as I have said, are ill-informed. They have all a pre-conceived notion that beer sometimes in large quantities (one porter said he limited himself to a pint an hour, when at work), is necessary to them "for support." Even if facts were brought conclusively to bear upon the subject to prove that so much beer, or any allowance of beer, was injurious, it would, I think, be difficult to convince the porters, for an ignorant man will not part with a pre-conceived notion. I heard from one man, more intelligent than his fellows, that a temperance lecturer once went among a body of the coalporters and talked about "alcohol" and "fermentation," and the like, until he was pronounced either mad or a Frenchman.

The question arises, Why is this ignorance allowed to continue, as a reproach to the men, to their employers, and to the community? Of the kindness of masters to the men, of discouragement of drunkenness, of persuasions to the men to care for the education of their children, I had the gratification of hearing frequently. But of any attempt to establish schools for the general instruction of the coalporters' children, of any talk of almshouses for the reception of the worn-out labourer, of any other provision for his old age, which is always premature through hard work,—of any movement for the amelioration of this class, I did not hear. Rude as these porters may be, machines as they may be accounted, they are the means of wealth to their employers, and deserve at least some care and regard on their part.

The way in which the barges are unladen to fill the waggons is the same in the rivers as in the canals. Two men standing in the barge fill the sacks, and three (or two) carry them along planks, if the barge be not moored close ashore to the waggon, which is placed as near the water as possible. In the canals, this work is carried on most regularly, as the water is not influenced by the tide, and the work can go on all day long. I will describe, therefore, what I saw in the City Basin, Regent's Canal. This canal has been opened about twenty years. It commences at the Grand Junction at Paddington, and falls into the Thames above the Limehouse Dock. Its course is circuitous, and in it are two tunnels —one at Islington, three-quarters of a mile long; the other at the Harrow Road a quarter

of a mile long. If a merchant in the Regent's Canal has purchased the cargo of a collier, such cargo is whipped into the barge. For the conducting of this laden barge to the Limehouse Basin of the canal, the merchant has to employ licensed lightermen, members of the Waterman's Company, as none else are privileged to work on the river. The canal attained, the barge is taken into charge by two men, who, not being regular "watermen," confine their labours to the canal. These men (a steerer and a driver) convey the barge,—suppose to the City Basin, Islington, which, as it is about midway, gives a criterion as to the charge and the time when other distances are concerned. They go back with an empty barge. Each of these bargemen has 2*s.* a barge for conveyance to the City Basin. The conveyance of the loaded barge occupies three hours, sixty-four tons of coal being an average cargo. Two barges a-day, in fine weather, can be thus conducted, giving a weekly earning to each man in full work of 24*s.* This is subject to casualties and deductions, but it is not my present intention to give the condition of these bargemen. I reserve this for a future and more fitting occasion. In frosty weather, when the ice has caused many delays, as much as 6*s.* a-barge per man has been paid; and, I was told, hard-earned money, too. A barge at such times has not been got into the City Basin in less than forty-eight hours. The crowded state of the canal at the wharfs at this time of the year, gives it the appearance of a crowded thoroughfare, there being but just room for one vessel to get along.

From the statement with which I was favoured by a house carrying on a very extensive business, it appears that the average earnings of the men in their employ was, the year through, upwards of 28*s.* I give the payments of twelve men regularly employed as the criterion of their earnings, on the best paid description of coalporters' labour, for four weeks at the busiest time:—

December 22	£21	5	5
„ 15	21	17	3
„ 8	22	10	1
November 17	28	8	0

This gives an average of more than 1*l.* 19*s.* per man a-week for this period; but the slackness of trade in the summer, when coals are in smaller demand, reduces the average to the amount I have stated. In the two weeks omitted in the above statement, viz. those ending December 1st and November 24th, fourteen men had to be employed, on account of the briskness of trade. Their joint earnings were 39*l.* 12*s.* 5*d.* one week, and 33*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.* the other. By this firm each waggoner is paid 1*l.* a-week, and 6*s.* extra if he "do" 100 tons; that is, 6*s.* between him and the trimmer. For every ton above 100 carried out by their waggoner and trimmer, 1*d.* extra is paid, and sometimes 130 are carried out, but only at a busy time; 142 have been carried out, but that only was remembered as the greatest amount at the wharf in question. For each waggon sent out, the waggoner and the trimmer together receive 4*d.* for "beer money" from their employers. They frequently receive money (if not drink) from the customers, and so the average of 28*s.* and upwards is made up. I saw two waggoners fully employed, and they fully corroborated this statement. Such payment, however, is not the rule. Many give the waggoner 21*s.* a-week, and employ him in doing whatever work may be required. A waggoner at what he called "poor work," three or four days a-week, told me he earned about 13*s.* on the average.

The scurfs are looked upon as, in many respects, the refuse of the trade. They are the men always hanging about the wharfs, waiting for any "odd job." They are generally coalporters who cannot be trusted with full and regular work, who were described to me as "tonguey, or drunken," anxious to get a job just to supply any pressing need, either for drink or meat, and careless of other consequences. Among them, however, are coalporters seeking employment, some with good characters. These scurfs, with the sifters, number, I understand, more than 500; thus altogether making, with the coalbackers and other classes of coalporters, a body of more than 2000.

I now come to the following statement, made by a gentleman who for more than thirty years has been familiar with all matters connected with the coal-merchants' trade. "I cannot say," he began, "that the condition of the coalporter (not referring to his earnings, but to his moral and intellectual improvement) is much amended now, for he is about the same sort of man that he was thirty years ago. There may be, and I have no doubt is, a greater degree of sobriety, but I fear chiefly on account of the men's earnings being now smaller, and their having less means at their command. Thirty-five years ago, before the general peace, labourers were scarce, and the coalporters then had full and ready employment, earning from 2*l.* to 3*l.* a-week. I have heard a coalporter say that one week he earned 5*l.*; indeed, I have heard several say so. After the peace, the supply of labour for the coal-trade greatly increased, and the coalporters' earnings fell gradually. The men employed in a good establishment thirty years ago, judging from the payments in our own establishment as a fair criterion, were in the receipt of nearly 3*l.* a-week on the average. At that time coal was delivered by the chaldron. A chaldron was composed of 12 sacks containing 36 bushels, and weighing about 25 cwt. (a ton and a-quarter). For the loading of the waggons a gang of four men, called 'fillers,' was, and is, employed. They were paid 1*s.* 4*d.* per chal-

dron; that is, 4*d.* per man. This was for measuring the coal, putting it into sacks, and putting the sacks into the waggon. The men in this gang had nothing to do with the conveyance of the coal to the customers. For that purpose two other men were employed; a 'waggoner,' and a man known as a 'trimmer,' or 'trouncer,' who accompanied the waggoner, and aided him in carrying the sacks from the waggon to the customers' coal-cellar, and in arranging the coal when delivered, so as properly to assort the small with the large, or indeed making any arrangement with them required by the purchaser. The waggoner and the trimmer were paid 1*s.* 3*d.* each per chaldron for delivery, but when the coal had to be carried up or down-stairs any distance, their charge was an extra shilling—2*s.* 3*d.* Many of the men have at that time, when work was brisk, filled and delivered fifteen chaldrons day by day, provided the distance for delivery was not very far. Drink was sometimes given by the customers to the waggoner and trimmer who had charge of the coal sent to their houses—perhaps generally given; and I believe it was always asked for, unless it happened to be given without asking. At that time I did not know one teetotaler; I do not know one personally among those parties now. Some took the pledge, but I believe none kept it. In this establishment we discourage drunkenness all that we possibly can. In 1832, wages having varied from the time of the peace until then, a great change took place. Previous to that time a reduction of 4*d.* per ton had been made in the payment of the men who filled the waggons (the fillers), but not in that of th waggoner or the trimmer. The change I allude to was that established by Act of Parliament, providing for the sale of all coal by the merchant being by weight instead of by measure. This change, it was believed, would benefit the public, by ensuring them the full quantity for which they bargained. I think it has benefited them. Coal was, under the former system, measured by the bushel, and there were frequently objections as to the way in which the bushel was filled. Some dealers were accused of packing the measure, so as to block it up with large pieces of coal, preventing the full space being filled with the coal. The then Act provided that the bushel measure should be heaped up with the coal so as to form a cone six inches above the rim of the measure. When the new Act came into operation the coalporters were paid 10*d.* a-ton among the gang of four fillers, and the same to the waggoner and trimmer. Before two years this became reduced generally to 9*d.* The gang could load twenty-five tons a-day without extra toil; forty tons, and perhaps more, have been loaded by a gang: but such labour continued would exhaust strong men. With extra work there was always extra drink, for the men fancy that their work requires beer 'for support.' My opinion is that a moderate allowance of good malt liquor, say three pints a-day when work is going on all day, is of advantage to a coalporter. In the winter they fancy it necessary to drink gin to warm them. At one time all the men drank more than now. I estimate the average earnings of a coalporter fully employed now at 1*l.* a-week. There are far more employed at present than when I first knew the trade, and the trade itself has been greatly extended by the new wharfs on the Regent's Canal, and up and down the river."

I had heard from so many quarters that "beer" was a necessity of the coal-labourers' work, that finding the coalwhippers the most intelligent of the whole class, I thought it best to call the men together, and to take their opinion generally on the subject. Accordingly I returned to the basketmen's waiting-room at the coalwhippers' office, and, as before, it was soon crowded. There were eighty present. Wishing to know whether the coalbacker's statement already given, that the drinking of beer was a necessity of hard labour, was a correct one, I put the question to the men there assembled: "Is the drinking of fermented liquors necessary for performing hard work? How many present believe that you can work without beer?" Those who were of opinion that it was necessary for the performance of their labour, were requested to hold up their hands, and *four* out of the eighty did so.

A basketman who had been working at the business for four years, and for two of those years had been a whipper, and so doing the heaviest labour, said that in the course of the day he had been one of a gang who had delivered as many as 189 tons. For this he had required no drink at all; cocoa was all he had taken. Three men in the room had likewise done without beer at the heaviest work. One was a coalwhipper, and had abstained for six years. Some difference of opinion seemed to exist as to the number in the trade that worked without beer. Some said 250, others not 150. One man stated that it was impossible to do without malt liquor. "One shilling a day properly spent in drink would prolong life full ten years," he said. This was received with applause. Many present declared that they had tried to do without beer, and had injured themselves greatly by the attempt. Out of the eighty present, fourteen had tried teetotalism, and had thrown it up after a time on account of its injuring their health. One man, on the other hand, said he had given the total-abstinence principle a fair trial for seven months, and had never found himself in such good health before. Another man stated, that to do a day's work of ninety-eight turns, three pints of beer were requisite. All but three believed this. The three pints were declared to be requisite in winter time, and four pints, or two pots, were considered to be not too much in a hot summer's day. Before the present office was instituted, each man, they

told me, drank half-a-pint of gin and six pots of beer daily. That was the average—many drank more. Then they could not do their work so well; they were weaker from not having so much food. The money went for drink instead of meat. They were always quarrelling on board a ship. Drunken men could never agree. A portion of beer is good, but too much is worse than none at all." This was the unanimous declaration.

Since this meeting I have been at considerable pains to collect a large amount of evidence in connexion with this most important question. The opinion of the most intelligent of the class seems to be, that no kind of fermented drink is necessary for the performance of the hardest labour; but I have sought for and obtained the sentiments of all classes, temperate and intemperate, with the view of fairly discussing the subject. These statements I must reserve till my next letter. At present I shall conclude with the following story of the sufferings of the wife of one of the intemperate class:—

"I have been married nineteen or twenty years. I was married at Penton, in Oxfordshire. We came to London fifteen years ago. My husband first worked as a sawyer. For eleven years he was in the coal-trade. He was in all sorts of work, and for the last six months he was a 'scurf.' What he earned all the time I never knew. He gave me what he liked, sometimes nothing at all. In May last he only gave me 2*s.* 8*d.* for the whole month, for myself and two children. I buried four children. I can't tell how we lived then. I can't express what we've suffered, all through drink. He gave me twenty years of misery through drink. [This was repeated four or five times.] Some days that May we had neither bit nor sup; the water was too bad to drink cold, and I had to live on water put through a few leaves in the teapot—old leaves. Poor people, you know, sir, helps poor people; and but for the poor neighbours we might have been found dead some day. He cared nothing. Many a time I have gone without bread to give it to the children. Was he ever kind to them, do you say, sir? No; they trembled when they heard his step; they were afraid of their very lives, he knocked them about so; drink made him a savage; drink took the father out of him." This was said with a flush and a rapid tone, in strong contrast with the poor woman's generally subdued demeanour. She resumed:—"Twenty miserable years through drink! I've often gone to bring him from the public-house, but he seldom would come. He would abuse me, and would drink more because I'd gone for him. I've often whispered to him that his children was starving: but I durstn't say that aloud when his mates was by. We seldom had a fire. He often beat me. I've 9*s.* in pawn now. Since we came to London I've lost 20*l.* in the pawnshop."

This man had died a fortnight before, having ruptured a blood-vessel. He lay ill six days. The parish doctor attended him. His comrades "gathered" for his burial, but the widow had still some funeral expenses to pay by instalments. The room she and the children occupied was the same as in the husband's lifetime. There was about the room a cold damp smell, arising from bad ventilation and the chilliness of the weather. Two wretched beds almost filled the place. No article was worth a penny, nor could a penny have been obtained at a sale or a pawnshop. The woman was cleanly clad, but looked sadly pinched, miserable, and feeble. She earns a little as a washerwoman, and did earn it while her husband lived. She bears an excellent character. Her repetition of the words, "*twenty years of misery through drink*," was very pitiful. I refrained from a prolonged questioning, as it seemed to excite her in her weak state.

BALLAST-MEN.

Having finished with the different classes of coal-labourers in London—the whippers, backers, pull-backs, trimmers, and waggoners—I purpose now dealing with the ballast-men, including the ballast-getters, the ballast-lightermen, and the ballast-heavers of the metropolis. My reason for pasing from the coal to the ballast-labourers is, because the latter class of the work-people are suffering under the same iniquitous and pernicious system of employment as that from which the coal-labourers have recently been emancipated, and the transition will serve to show not only the present condition of the one class of men, but the past state of the other.

After treating of the ballast-labourers, I purpose inquiring into the condition and income of the stevedores, or men engaged in the stowing or unstowing of vessels; and of the lumpers and riggers, or those engaged in the rigging and unrigging of them. It is then my intention to pass to the corn-labourers, such as the corn-porters, corn-runners, and turners, touching incidentally upon the corn-meters. After this, I mean to devote my attention to the timber-labourers engaged at the different timber-docks—as, for instance, the Commercial, the Grand Surrey, and the East Country Docks. Then, in due course, I shall come to the wharf-labourers and porters, or men engaged at the different wharfs in London; thence I shall digress to the bargemen and lightermen, or men engaged in the transit of the different cargoes from the ships to their several points of destination up or down the river; and finally, I shall treat of the watermen, the steamboat-men, and pier-men, or those engaged in the transit of passengers along the Thames. These, with the dock-labourers, of whom I have before treated, will, I believe, exhaust the subject of the long-

shore labourers; and the whole will, I trust, form, when completed, such a body of facts and information, in connexion with this particular branch of labour, as has never before been collected. I am happy to say, that, with some few exceptions, I have received from the different official gentlemen not only every courtesy and consideration, but all the assistance and co-operation that it lay in their power to afford me. Every class seems to look upon the present inquiry as an important undertaking, and all, save the Clerk of the Coal Exchange and the Deputy-Superintendent of the London Docks, have shown themselves not only willing, but anxious, to lend a hand towards expediting the result.

Before quitting the subject of the coal-market, let me endeavour to arrive at an estimate as to the amount of wealth annually brought into the port of London by means of the colliers, and to set forth, as far as possible, the proportion in which it is distributed. I have already given some statistics, which, notwithstanding the objections of a coal-merchant, who, in a letter to a journal, stated that I had reckoned the number of ships at twice the real quantity, were obtained from such sources, and, I may add, with so much care and caution, as to render them the most accurate information capable of being procured at present on the subject. The statistics of the number of tons of coals brought into the port of London in the year 1848, the number of vessels employed, of the voyages made by those vessels collectively, and of the seamen engaged in the traffic, were furnished by the Clerk of the Coal Exchange at the time of the opening of the new building. Had the coal-merchant, therefore, made it his duty to devote the same time and care to the investigation of the truth of my statements that I have to the collection of them, he would not only have avoided committing the very errors he condemns, but would have displayed a more comprehensive knowledge of his business.

In 1848 there were imported into the London coal market 3,418,340 tons of coal. These were sold to the public at an average rate all the year round of 22*s.* 6*d.* a ton. Hence the sum expended in the metropolis for coal in that year was 3,845,632*l.* 10*s.*

There are 21,600 seamen engaged in the coal trade, and getting on an average 3*l.* 10*s.* per man per voyage. Each of these men makes between 4 and 5 voyages in the course of the year. Hence the average earnings of each man per year will be 15*l.* 18*s.*, exclusive of his keep; calculating that at 5*s.* per week, or 13*l.* per year, we have 28*l* 18*s.* for the expense of each of the seamen employed. Hence, as there are 21,600 sailors in the coal trade, the total yearly cost would be	£624,240 0 0
There are 170 coal-meters, earning, on an average, 2*l.* per week, or 104*l.* per year each man. This would make the total sum paid in the year to the coal-meters	17,680 0 0
There are 2000 coal-whippers, earning 15*s.* 1½*d.* each per week, or 39*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* per man. Hence the total sum paid in the course of last year to the coal-whippers was	78,650 0 0
There are 3000 coal-porters earning, on an average, 1*l.* per week, or 52*l.* per year per man, so that they receive annually	156,000 0 0
Hence the total amount paid per year to the working-men engaged in bringing and delivering coals in the London market is	£876,570 0 0

The area of all the coal-fields of Great Britain has been roughly estimated at 9000 square miles. The produce is supposed to be about 32,000,000 tons annually, of which 10,000,000 tons are consumed in the iron-works, 8,500,000 tons are shipped coastwise, 2,500,000 tons are exported to foreign countries, and 11,000,000 tons distributed inland for miscellaneous purposes: Near upon 4,000,000 tons were brought to London by ships and otherwise in the year 1848, and it is computed that about one-eighth part of this, or 500,000 tons, were consumed by the gas-works.

The price of coals as quoted in the London market is the price up to the time when the coals are whipped from the ships to the merchants' barges. It includes, 1st. the value of the coals; 2d. the expense of transit from the pit to the ship; 3d. the freight of the ship to London; 4th. the Thames' dues; and 5th. the whipping. The difference between the market price and that paid by the consumer is made up of the expense incurred by the coal-merchant for barges, wharfs, waggons, horses, wages, coal-porters, &c., to his profit and risk. In 1836 the expenses incurred by the merchant from the time he bought a ship-load of coals to the deposition of them in the cellars of his customers amounted, on an average, it was said, to 7*s.* a ton. These expenses comprise commission, lighterage, porterage, cartage, shooting, metage, market-dues, land-metage, and other items. At the present time the expenses must be considerably lower, the wages of the labourers and the meters having been lowered full 50 per cent, though the demand for and consumption of coal has increased at nearly the same rate; indeed the law of the coal-market appears to be, that in

proportion as the demand for the article rises, so do the wages of the men engaged in the supply of it fall.

As the ballast-heavers are under the thraldom of the same demoralising and oppressive system as that which the coal-whippers recently suffered under, it may be as well, before going further, to lay before the reader the following concise account of the terms on which the latter were engaged before the Coal-whippers' Office was established.

Until the last few years the coal-whippers suffered themselves to be duped in an extraordinary way by publicans and petty shopkeepers on shore. The custom was, for the captain of a coal-ship, when he required a cargo to be whipped, to apply to one of these publicans for a gang; and a gang was accordingly sent from the public-house. There was no professed or pre-arranged deduction from the price paid for the work; the captain paid the publican, and the publican paid the coal-whippers; but the middleman had his profit another way. The coal-whipper was expected to come to the public-house in the morning; to drink while waiting for work, to take drink with him to the ship, to drink again when the day's work was over, and to linger about and in the public-house until almost bed-time before his day's wages were paid. The consequence was, that an enormous ratio of his earnings went every week to the publican. The publicans were wont to divide their dependants into two classes — the constant men and the stragglers, of whom the former were first served whenever a cargo was to be whipped; in return for this they were expected to spend almost the whole of their spare time in the public-house, and even to take up their lodgings there.

The captains preferred applying to the publicans to engaging the men themselves, because it saved them trouble; and because (as was pretty well understood) the publicans curried favour with them by indirect means; grocers and small shopkeepers did the same, and the coal-whippers had then to buy bad and dear groceries instead of bad and dear beer and gin. The Legislature tried by various means to protect the coal-whippers, but the publicans contrived means to evade the law. At length, in 1843, an Act was passed, which has placed the coal-whippers in a far more advantageous position.

The transition from coal-labour to ballast-labour is gradual and easy, and would be even if the labourers were not kindred in suffering.

The coal-ships, when discharged by the whippers, must get back to the north; and as there are not cargoes enough from London to freight them, they must take in ballast to make the ships heavy enough to sail in safety. This ballast is chiefly ballast or sand, dredged up from the bed of the Thames at and near Woolwich Reach. The Trinity House takes upon itself this duty. The captain, when he requires to sail, applies to the Ballast Office, and the required weight of ballast is sent to the ship in lighters belonging to the Trinity House, the captain paying so much a ton for it. About 80 tons on an average are required for each vessel, and the quantity thus supplied by the Trinity House is about 10,000 tons per week. Some of the ships are ballasted with chalk taken from Purfleet; all ballast taken from higher up the river than that point must be supplied by the Trinity House. When the ship reaches the Tyne, the ballast is of no further use, but it must not be emptied into that river; it has, therefore, to be deposited on the banks, where huge mounds are now collected two or three hundred feet high.

New places on the banks of the river have to be discovered for this deposit as the ballast mounds keep increasing, for it must be recollected that the vessels leave these ports — no matter for what destination — with coal, and may return in ballast. Indeed a railway has been formed from the vicinity of South Shields to a waste place on the sea-shore, hard by the mouth of the Tyne, where the ballast may be conveyed at small cost, its further accumulation on the river bank being found an incumbrance. "It is really something more than a metaphor," it has been said, "to designate this a transfer of the bed of the Thames to the banks of the Tyne." We may add as another characteristic, that some of the older ballast mounds are overgrown with herbage. As the vessels from foreign ports returning to the coal-ports in ballast, have not unfrequently to take soil on board for ballast, in which roots and seeds are contained, some of there struggle into vegetation, so that Italian flowers not unfrequently attempt to bloom in Durham, Yorkshire, or Northumberland, while some have survived the climate and have spread around; and thus it is that botanists trace the history of plants which are called indigenous to the ballast-hills.

Before treating of the ballast labourers themselves I shall give a brief history of the ballast laws.

Ships are technically said to be in ballast when they sail without a cargo, having on board only the stores and other articles requisite for the use of the vessel and crew, as well as of any passengers who may be proceeding with her upon the voyage. In favour of vessels thus circumstanced it is usual to dispense with many formalities at the custom-houses of the ports, and to remit the payment of the dues and charges levied upon ships having cargoes on board. A foreign vessel proceeding from a British port may take chalk on board as ballast. Regulations have at various times been made in different ports and countries, determining the modes in which ships may be supplied with ballast, and in what manner they may discharge the same, such regulations being necessary to prevent injury to harbours.

Charles I. published a proclamation in 1636, ordering that none shall buy any ballast out of the river Thames but a person appointed by him for that purpose. And this appointment was sold for the king's profit. Since then the soil of the river Thames has been vested in the corporation of the Trinity House, and a fine of 10*l.* may be recovered for every ton of ballast taken out of the river without the authority of the corporation. Ships may take on board land-ballast from any quarries or pits east of Woolwich by paying 1*d.* per ton to the Trinity House. For river-ballast the corporation are authorised by Act of Parliament to make other charges. The receipts of the Trinity House from this source were 33,591*l.* in the year 1840, and their expenses were 31,622*l.*, leaving a clear profit of 1969*l.* The ballast of all ships or vessels coming into the Thames must be unladen into a lighter, and if any ballast be thrown into the river the master of the vessel whence it is thrown is liable to a fine of 20*l.* Some such regulation is usually enforced at every port.

Before proceeding further with my present subject, it is proper that I should express my acknowledgments of the ready courtesy with which the official information necessary for the full elucidation of my subject was supplied to me by the Secretary of the principal Ballast Office at Trinity House, Tower Hill. I have always observed, that when the heads of a department willingly supply information to go before the public, I find in the further course of my investigations that under such departments the claims of the labourer are not only acknowledged but practically allowed. On the other hand, if official gentlemen neglect (which is to refuse) to supply the returns and other information, it is because the inquiry is unpalatable to them, as the public may find that in their departments the fair claims of the labourers are *not* allowed. Were the poor ballast-heavers taken under the protection of the corporation of the Trinity House (something in the same way that Parliament has placed the coal-whippers under the guardianship of a board of commissioners) the good done would be great indeed, and the injury would be none: for it cannot be called an injury to prevent a publican forcing a man to buy and swallow bad drink.

By charter of Queen Elizabeth in the 36th year of her reign, the lastage and ballastage, and office of lastage and ballastage, of all ships and other vessels betwixt the bridge of the city of London and the main sea, I am informed by the Secretary of the Trinity Company, was granted to the Master Wardens and Assistants of the Trinity House of Deptford Strond. This was renewed, and the gravel, sand, and soil of the river Thames granted to the said master wardens, &c. for the ballasting of ships and vessels in the 15th year of Charles II., and again in the 17th year of the reign of that monarch. This last-named charter remains in force, and has been confirmed by Acts of Parliament at different times; by which Acts also various regulations in relation to the conduct of the ballast service, the control of the persons employed therein, and the prices of the ballast supplied, have been established. The Act now in force is the 6th and 7th Vict. cap. 57.

The number of men employed in lighters as ballast-getters, or in barges conveying it from the dredgers, is 245, who are paid by the ton raised.

The number of vessels entered for ballast in the year 1848 was:

Colliers	6,480
British merchant vessels .	3,690
Aliens	1,054
Total vessels .	11,224

The total quantity of ballast supplied to shipping in the year 1848 was 615,619 tons, or thereabouts; such ballast being gravel raised from the bed of the river Thames and delivered alongside of vessels, either lying in the different docks or being afloat in the stream between London-bridge and Woolwich.

The number of vessels employed in this service is 69, viz:—

	Men.
3 steam dredging-vessels, having 8 men in each . . .	24
43 lighters, having 4 men in each .	172
9 lighters, having 5 men in each .	45
14 barges, having 2 men in each .	28
69 Total	269

The ballast is delivered into the vessels from the lighters and barges by men called ballast-heavers, who are employed by the vessel, and are not in the service of the Trinity House.

I now come to the nature of the ballast labour itself. This is divisible into three classes: that performed by the ballast-getters, or those who are engaged in raising it from the bed of the Thames; by the ballast-lighters, or those who are engaged in carrying it from the getters to the ships requiring it; and by the ballast-heavers, or those who are engaged in putting it on board of such ships. The first and second of these classes have, according to their own account, "nothing to complain of," being employed by gentlemen who, judging by the wanton neglect of labouring men by their masters, so general in London, certainly exhibit a most extraordinary consideration and regard for their work-people; and the change from the indifference and callousness of the coal-merchants to the kindness of the corporation of the Trinity House is most gratifying. The ballast-heavers constitute an entirely different class. They have every one, to a man, deep and atrocious wrongs to complain of, such as I am sure are unknown, and which, when once made public, will at once demand some remedy.

I must, however, first deal with

The Ballast-Getters.

Of these there are two sub-classes, viz. those engaged in obtaining the ballast by steam power, and those who still procure it as of old by muscular power.

Of seven dredging-engines employed in the collecting of ballast from the bed of the Thames there are three, the Hercules, the Goliath, and the Samson. These are now stationed respectively in Barking Reach, Half Reach near Dagenham, and the bottom of Half-way Reach off Rainham. Most persons who have proceeded up or down the Thames will have perceived black unshapely masses, with no visible indications that they may be classed with steam-vessels except a chimney and smoke. These are the dredging-vessels; they are of about 200 tons burden. The engines of the Hercules and the Samson are of 20-horse power,—those of the Goliath are 25. When the process of dredging is carried on, the use of the dredging-vessel is obvious to any spectator; but I believe that most persons imagine the object to be merely to deepen the river by removing inequalities in its bed, and so to render its navigation easier by equalizing its depth, and in some degrees checking the power of cross-currents. Few are aware that an ulterior object is gained. I visited one of these steam-dredgers, and was very courteously shown over it. The first feeling was an impression of the order, regularity, and trimness that prevailed. In the engineers' department, too, there was an aspect, as well as a feeling, of extreme snugness, the more perceptible both to the eye and the body from its contrast with the intense cold on the muddy river outside, then running down in very strong ebb. In the engineers' department there was more than cleanliness; there was a brightness about the brass-handles attached to the machinery, and, indeed, about every portion of the apparatus at all susceptible of brightness, which indicated a constant and systematic attention by well-skilled hands. Each dredger carries eight men, the master (called the captain, commonly enough, on the river), two engineers, an engineer's assistant, two legsmen (who attend to the ladders), and three men for general purposes. They are all called engine-men. The master of the dredger I visited had the weather-beaten look of the experienced seaman, and the quiet way of talking of past voyages which is found generally in men who have really served, whether in the merchant service or royal navy. He resided on board the dredger with his wife and family, the principal cabin being a very comfortable parlour. All the men live on board, having their turns for visit to the shore from Saturday morning, noon, or evening (as their business permits), to Monday morning. Their sleeping-places are admirable for cleanliness. All the dredgers are under the control of the corporation of the Trinity House. They are, as it was worded to me, as strong as wood and iron can make them. But for secure anchorage these dredgers would soon go adrift. Colliers beating up or down occasionally run against the dredgers: this happens mostly in light winds, when the masters of these colliers are afraid to let go their anchors. The machinery consists of a steam-engine and spur-gear for directing the buckets. The application of the steam-power I need not minutely describe, as it does not differ from other applications where motion has to be communicated. It is connected with strong iron beams, having cogged and connected wheels, which when put into operation give upward and downward motion to the buckets. These buckets are placed on ladders as they are called, one on each side the vessel. These ladders (or shafts) consist of three heavy beams of wood, firmly bolted together and fitted with friction-wheels. To each ladder 29 buckets are attached, each bucket holding 2½ cwt. of gravel. Each bucket is attached by joints to the next, and a series of holes permits the water drawn up with the deposit to ooze out. When the bucket touches the bottom of the river it dips, as it is called. A rotary motion being communicated, the construction ensures the buckets being brought up flat on the ladder until a due height is attained, when the rotary (or circular) motion again comes into play, and the contents of the bucket are emptied into a lighter moored alongside, and the empty bucket is driven down to be refilled. The contents so drawn up are disposed of for ballast, which is the ulterior purpose I have alluded to. Upon an average the buckets revolve once in two minutes. That time, however, varies, from the nature of the bed of the river. The Goliath and the Samson being fitted up with marine engines drive the fastest. The three vessels have for the last year worked within a circle of a mile. The quantity of ballast raised depends upon the demand, as well as upon the character of the deposit at the bottom of the river. Between 900 and 1000 tons have been raised in 7½ hours, sometimes in a like period less than 300 tons have been raised. The dredger I was on board of has taken in a year from 180,000 to 190,000 tons. A stratum of mud 2½ feet had been raised, then 3 feet of gravel, and a chalk bottom was anticipated. In some places 15 feet have been so cleared away to a chalk bottom. In others 15 feet have been so worked off, and no bottom but gravel reached. The gravel lies in shoals. Sometimes the dredgers come to hard conglomerate gravel, as compact as a rock. No fossils have been found. In a few places a clay bottom has been met with. The men in the dredgers are paid according to the number of tons raised, the proceeds being

duly apportioned. They work as frequently by night as by day, their labour depending upon the time when an order for a supply of ballast is received. Each lighter holds 60 tons of ballast. The dredgers above bridge are the property of individuals working with the concurrence of the civic corporation of London. Those below bridge are, as I have said, under the control of the corporation of the Trinity House. The Hercules was the first Trinity House dredger worked by steam. Private individuals, however, employed steam sooner than the Trinity House authorities to draw up materials to mix with lime for building purposes. The first Trinity House steam-dredger was started in 1827.

I had some conversation with a man employed on one of the steam-dredgers. He described the process carried on there as I have given it, estimating the tons of ballast raised at about 4000 a-week. He expressed a sense of his good fortune in having the employment he had; he was well used, and wouldn't like to change. He declined stating his earnings (otherwise than that he had his fair share) until he saw his master, and of course I did not press him further on the subject.

The ballast-getters are men employed in raising ballast from the bed of the river by bodily labour. The apparatus by which this is effected consists of a long staff or pole, about thirty-five feet in length. At the end of this is an iron "spoon" or ring, underneath which is a leathern bag holding about 20 cwt. The ballast is raised on board the working-lighters by means of this spoon. The working-lighters carry six hands: that is, a staffsman whose duty it is to attend to the staff; a bagman, who empties the bag; a chainsman, who hauls at the chain; a heelsman, who lets go the pall of the winch; and two trimmers, who trim the ballast in the lighter as fast as it comes in. Previous to the men getting at work, the staffsman takes hold of the spoon to feel whereabout the ballast-bed lies. When this is found, he puts down his "sets," as it is termed,—that is to say, he drives the iron-tipped spars that he has with him in the lighter into the ground, so as to steady the craft. This done, the staffsman seizes hold of the middle of the staff, while the bargeman takes the bag and the chainsman the chain, which is fastened to the iron ring or spoon; the staff is thus thrown overboard into the water, about midway of the lighter, and the tide carries the spoon down towards the stern. The staffsman then fastens the staff to the lighter by means of the gaff-string or rope attached to the side of the vessel. At the same time the men go forward to heave at the winch, round the roll of which the chain attached to the spoon itself is wound. All the men, with the exception of the staffsman, then heave away, and so drag the spoon along the bed of the river. When the staffsman feels that the bag is full, he leaves go of the gaff-string and goes forward to heave with the men as well. Immediately the gaff-string is undone the top part of the staff falls back on an oar that projects from the after-part of the vessel, and the bag is then raised by means of the winch and chain to the level of the gunwale of the craft; then the bagsman hauls it in and empties it into the lighter, while the two trimmers spread the ballast discharged. The spoon can only be worked when the tide is nearly down, because the water would be too deep for the set to bring the craft steady. To hoist the 20 cwt. of ballast in the bag will require the whole force of the six men; and none but the very strongest are of use. The ballast-getters are all very powerful men; they are mostly very tall, big-boned, and muscular. Many of them are upwards of six feet high, and have backs two feet broad. "I lifted seven half-hundredweights with one of my hands," said one whom I saw. He was a man of thirty-nine years of age, and stood half an inch over six feet, while another was six feet two inches. They were indeed extraordinarily fine specimens of the English labourer, making our boasted Life-guardsman appear almost weak and effeminate in comparison with them. Before the steam dredging-engines were introduced, I am informed the ballast-getters were even bigger and heavier men than they are now. The ballast-getters seldom or never fish up anything besides ballast. Four or five years back they were lucky enough to haul up a box of silver plate; but they consider a bit of old iron or a bit of copper very good luck now. The six men generally raise sixty tons eighteen feet high in the course of the tide, which is at the rate of 22,400 lbs. each man in three hours: this makes the quantity raised per hour by each man upwards of 7400 lbs. The price paid is 8*d.* per ton, or 2*l.* for sixty tons; this is shared equally among five of the men, who receive 8*s.* a-piece as their proportion, and out of this they pay 3*s.* 6*d.* a tide to the stern-trimmer, whom they employ—the Trinity Company allowing only five men and the ballast-getters engaging the sixth man themselves. Upon an average the ballast-getters do about three loads in the week throughout the year,—this, deducting the money paid to the sixth man, makes the earnings of each ballast-getter come to about 22*s.* throughout the year. The staffsman is allowed 20*l.* a-year to keep the craft in gear. The ballast-getters usually work above the dredging-engines, mostly about Woolwich; there the cleanest ballast is to be got. The Trinity Company they speak most highly of; indeed the corporation are universally spoken of as excellent masters: the men say they have nothing to complain of. They get their money on every Friday night, and have no call to spend a farthing of their earnings otherwise than as they please. They only wish, they add, that the ballast-heavers were as well off. "It would be a good job if they was, poor men," say one and all.

The second class of ballast-labourers are

The Ballast-Lightermen.

These are men engaged by the Trinity Company to carry the ballast in the company's barges and lighters from the steam dredging-engines to the ship's side. The corporation has fifty-two lighters and fourteen barges, all sixty-ton craft. Each lighter carries four men, and there are two men in each barge; so that altogether 108 lightermen and 28 bargemen are employed in bringing the ballast from the engines. These men are not required to have a license from the Waterman's Company, like other lightermen and bargemen on the Thames, and that is one of the reasons for my dealing with them at present. They form a class of labourers by themselves, and I treat of them here because it appears the fittest place for a statement of their condition and earnings. Besides the lightermen and bargemen engaged in carrying the ballast from the steam dredging-machines, there are others employed on board what are called the working-lighters; these are vessels in which ballast is got up from the bed of the river by muscular labour. There are ten of these working-lighters, and six men engaged in each, or in all sixty men employed in raising ballast by such means. There are three steam dredging-engines employing each eight men, or twenty-four in all; so that there are altogether 220 labouring men engaged in the ballast service of the Trinity Company. Each of the carrying lighters has a staffsman or master and three men. The lighters all carry sixty tons of ballast, and make upon an average between three and four voyages a-week, or about seven in the fortnight. There is no place of deposit for the ballast brought up the river from the engines; it is left in the lighter until required. The ballast chiefly consists of gravel; indeed the ships will mostly refuse anything else. When there is a plentiful supply of ballast they will refuse clay in particular. Clayey ballast is what is termed bad ballast. Upon an average there are thirty loads, or 1800 tons of ballast, brought up by the lighters every day from the engines. In the course of the year there are between 550,000 and 600,000 tons of ballast supplied by the three steam dredging-machines. "It is about three-and-twenty years since the steam dredging-engine first came out," said the party who gave me the above information. "For the last twenty years I should think the company have been raising about 500,000 tons of gravel from the bed of the river. Thirty years ago I thought the ballast would soon be out, but there appears to be little or no difference; and yet the shoals do not fill up again after being once taken away. In Barking Reach I am sure there is six feet more water now than there was thirty years ago; there was at that time a large shoal in that part of the river, called Barking Shelf; it was certainly a mile long and half a mile wide. The vessels would ground upon it long before low water. At some tides it used to strip dry, and at low tide generally there was about six foot of water over it. That part of the river is now the deepest about Barking, and as deep as the best of places in the Thames. When I first came to London we were prevented from getting the ballast from anywhere else than Barking, on account of the great shoals there; but now the great ballast-bed is between four and five miles lower down. The river has been very nearly cleared of shoals by the dredging-engines, from Limehouse Reach to the bottom of Half Reach. The only shoal in the way of the navigation below the Pool is what is called Woolwich Shelf: there is indeed another shoal, but this consists of stiff clay or conglomerate, and the engines cannot work through it. The men on board the carrying-lighters are paid 5*d.* a-ton for bringing the ballast from the dredging-engines to the ships; this is equally divided among the four men. The staffsman, in addition to his fourth share, receives 10*l.* a-year for his extra duties; but out of this he has to buy oars for the boat and lighter, locks, fenders, and shovels. Upon an average the cost of these will be about 30*s.* a-year. Each man's share of the sixty-ton load is 6*s.* 3*d.*; and there are about seven loads brought up by each lighter in the fortnight. Some weeks the men can earn as much as 37*s.*, but at others they cannot get more than 12*s.* 6*d.* "I did myself only two load last week," said my informant. "When there is little or no 'vent,' as we call it, for the ballast—that is, but a slight demand for it—we have but little work. Upon an average, each lighterman makes from 21*s.* to 22*s.* a-week. At the time of the strike among the pitmen in the North, the lightermen, generally, only did about two load a-week throughout the year; but then the following year we had as much as we could do. The Trinity Company, whom I serve, and have served for thirty years, are excellent masters to us when we are sick or well. The corporation of the Trinity House allow the married lightermen in their service 10*s.* and the single ones 7*s.* 6*d.* a-week, as long as they are ill. I have known the allowance given to men for two years, and for this we pay nothing to any benefit society or provident fund. If we belong to any such society we have our sick money from them independent of that. The superannuation money is now 6*l.* a-year; but I understand," continued the man, "that the company intend increasing it next Tuesday. Some of the old men were ordered up to the house a little while ago, and were asked what they could live comfortably upon, and one of the gentlemen there promised them that no more of us should go to the workhouse. They do not provide any school for our children; a great many of the lightermen neither read nor write. I never heard any talk of the company

erecting a school, either for the instruction of their men or their men's families. All I can say is, that in all my dealings with the Trinity Corporation I have found them very kind and considerate masters. They are always ready to listen to the men, and they have hospitals for the sick in their employ and midwives for the wives of the labourers; and they bury, free of expense, most of the men that die in their service. To the widows of their deceased servants they allow 6*l.* a-year; and if there be any children, they give 2*s.* a-month to each under fourteen years old. I never knew them to reduce the lightermen's wages; they have rather increased than lowered them. After the introduction of the steam-dredging machines we were better off than we were before. Previous to that time the lightermen were getters as well, and then the labour was so hard that the expenses of the men for living were more than they are now."

I now come in due order to

The Ballast-Heavers.

Of these I can at present give but a general description. The individual instances of oppression that I have sought out I must reserve for a subsequent page, when I most heartily hope that the publication of the iniquity of which these poor fellows are the victims, will be at least instrumental in putting an end to a most vile and wicked plan for the degradation and demoralization of our fellow-creatures. The tales I have to tell are such as must rouse every heart not positively indurated by the love of gain. I must, however, be here content, as I said before, with merely describing the system.

The duty of the ballast-heaver is to heave into the holds of the ship the ballast brought alongside the vessel by the Trinity-lighters from the dredging-engines. The ships take in ballast either in the docks or in the Pool. When the ship is cranky-built, and cannot stand steady after a portion of her cargo has been discharged, she usually takes in what is called shifting or stiffening ballast. The ballast is said to stiffen a cranky vessel, because it has the effect of making her firm or steady in the water. The quantity of ballast required by cranky vessels depends upon the build of the ships. Sixty tons of cargo will stiffen the most cranky vessel. I am informed by those who have been all their lives at the business, that they never knew a vessel, however cranky, but what 60 tons' weight would stiffen her. Some vessels are so stiff-built, that they can discharge the whole of their cargo without taking in any ballast at all. These are generally flat-bottomed vessels, whereas cranky vessels are built sharp towards the keel. The colliers are mostly flat-bottomed vessels, and could in calm weather return to the north without either ballast or cargo in them. This, however, is not allowed by the owners. The generality of ships discharge all their cargo before they take in any ballast. The cranky-built ships form the exception, and begin taking in ballast when they are about three-parts discharged. When a ship requires ballast, the owner or one of his agents or servants applies to the Trinity House for the quantity needed. If the ship belong to the merchant service, and is lying in any of the docks, the owner has to pay 1*s.* 7*d.* per ton to the Trinity Company for the ballast supplied: but if the merchant vessel be lying in the Pool, then the price is 1*s.* 3*d.* per ton, and if the vessel be a collier, the price is 1*s.* per ton. On application being made at the Ballast Office, the party is supplied with a bill, specifying the name and situation of the vessel, the quantity of ballast required for her, and the price that has been paid for it. The bill is then taken to the Ruler's Office, where it is entered in a book, and the ship supplied with the ballast, according to the place that she has on the books. If the weather is rough, a ship has often to remain three or four days without receiving the ballast she wants. The application for ballast is seldom made directly from the captain or shipowner himself. There are parties living in the neighbourhood of Wapping and Ratcliffe who undertake, for a certain sum per score of tons, to have the requisite quantity of ballast put aboard the ship. These parties are generally either publicans, grocers, butchers, lodging-house keepers or watermen, and they have a number of labourers dealing with them whom they employ to heave the ballast on board. The publicans, butchers, grocers, or lodging-house-keepers, are the ballast-contractors, and they only employ those parties who are customers at their houses. It is the owner or captain of the vessel who contracts with these "truckmen" for the ballasting of the ship at a certain price per score of tons, and the truckmen for that sum undertake not only to procure the ballast from the Trinity Company, and save the owner or captain all the trouble of so doing, but also to carry it from the Trinity-lighters on board the ship. The reason of the publicans, grocers, butchers, or lodging-house-keepers, undertaking the job is to increase the custom at their shops, for they make it a rule to employ no heavers but those who purchase their goods from them. The price paid to these truckmen varies considerably. Their principal profit, however, is made out of the labourers they employ. The highest price paid to the contractors for putting the ballast on board colliers (exclusive of the cost of the ballast itself) is 10*s.* per score tons. Many contractors charge less than this—not a few indeed undertake to do it for 9*s.*, and there are one or two who will do it for 8*s.* the score. But these, I am informed, "are men who are trying to get the work away from the other contractors." The highest price paid to the contractors for

ballasting small merchant vessels is 12*s.* per score as well. For large vessels the price varies according to their size, and, consequently, the number of heavers required to put the ballast on board. The lowest price paid per score to the contractors for small merchant vessels is 10*s.* Eight or nine years ago the price for ballasting small merchant vessels was much higher. Then the highest price paid to the contractor was 15*s.* Since that time the prices both for merchant vessels and colliers have been continually falling. This, I am told, arises from the number of contractors increasing, and their continual endeavours to underwork one another. Before the establishment of the Coal-whippers' Office, the contractors for ballast were solely publicans; and they not only undertook to put ballast on board, but to deliver the coals from the ships as well. At this time the publicans engaged in the business made rapid and large fortunes, and soon became shipowners themselves, but after the institution of the Coal-whippers' Office, the business of the publicans, who had before been the contractors, declined. Since that period the contracts for ballasting ships have been undertaken by butchers and grocers, as well as publicans, and the number of these has increased every year, and according as the number of the contractors has increased, so have the prices decreased, for each one is anxious to undersell the other. In order to do this, the contractors have sought everywhere for fresh hands, and the lodging-house-keepers in particular have introduced labouring men from the country, who will do the work at a less price than those who have been regularly brought up to the business: and I am credibly informed, that whereas nine or ten years ago every ballast-heaver was known to his mates, now the strangers have increased to such an extent that at least two-thirds of the body are unacquainted with the rest. There is treble the number of hands at the work now, I am told, to what there was but a few years back. The prices paid by the contractors to the ballast-heavers are very little below what the owners pay to them, indeed some of the publicans pay the heavers the same price that they themselves receive, and make their profit solely out of the beer and spirits supplied to the workmen. The butchers and grocers generally pay the men 6*d.* and some 1*s.* in the score less than they themselves get; but, like the publican, their chief profit is made out of the goods they supply. The lodging-house-keepers seldom contract for the work. They are generally foremen employed by the publican, butcher, or grocer contracting, and they make it a rule that the ballast-heavers whom they hire shall lodge at their house, as well as procure their beer, meat, or grocery, as the case may be, from the shop of the contractor by whom they are employed. All the English ships that enter the port of London are supplied with ballast in this manner. The owners always make it a rule to contract with some publican, butcher, grocer, or lodging-house-keeper for the ballasting of their vessels, and it is impossible for the ballast-heaver to obtain employment at his calling but by dealing at the shops of some or other of these parties. According to the Government returns there were 170 ballast-heavers in the metropolis in 1841, and I am assured that there are more than double that number at present, or nearly 400 labourers engaged in the business. There are now 27 publicans who make a regular business of contracting for the supply of ballast. Besides these there are four butchers, the same number of grocers, and as many lodging-house-keepers. Further than this, there is a foreman attached to each of the public-houses, or butchers' or grocers' shops, and these foremen are mostly lodging-house-keepers as well. The foremen in general have the engagement of the heavers, and the first hands they employ are those who lodge at their houses: these hands are expected also to deal with the contractor under whose foreman they serve. The heavers generally, therefore, are obliged to lodge at the house of some foreman, and to obtain their meat, beer, and grocery from the different ballast-contractors, in order to obtain work; indeed, with the exception of clothing, the heaver is compelled to obtain almost every article he consumes through the medium of some contractor. The greater the number of contractors the heaver deals with, the greater is his chance of work. The rule with each of the contractors is to give credit to the hands they employ, and those who are the most in debt with them have the preference in labour. The butchers and grocers generally charge 1*d.* per lb. extra for everything they sell to the heavers, and the publicans make it up in adulteration. Each of the publicans, butchers, and grocers, who make a rule of contracting for the supply of ballast, has, on an average, two gangs of men dealing at his house, and if he have more ships to supply than his regular hands are capable of doing, then he sends the foreman to either of the places of call where the unemployed men wait for hire throughout the day. Each ship requires from four to six heavers to put the ballast on board, and the men generally ship about 50 tons in the course of the day. They often do as much as 100 tons, and sometimes only 20 in the day. The heavers are divided into constant and casualty men.

"The constant men are the first gang working out of the public-house, or butchers' or grocers' shops. The constant men with the publicans are those that are the best customers. "If they didn't drink," said my informant, "they'd be thought of very little use. These constant men make three times as much as the casualty men, or, in other words, they have three times as much to drink. Generally, one-fifth part of what the publican's constant

men earn is spent in drink. The casualty men are those who belong to no regular houses; but these, if taken on by a publican, are expected to spend the same amount in drink as the constant men. There are no ballast-heavers who are teetotalers. "Indeed it would be madness," says my informant, "for a man to think of it, for to sign the pledge would be entirely to deprive himself and his family of bread."

To complete the different classes of ballast-labourers, I will conclude with the statement of a casualty man:—

"I am about 57," (said my informant, who was 6 feet high, and looked like a man far older than 57,) "and have been 35 years a ballast-heaver, with the exception of seven or eight years, when I had the care of some horses used in coal-waggons. When I first knew the trade, earnings was good. I might clear my 1*l.* a-week. On that I brought up four sons and one daughter—all now married. At that time, I mean when I first worked at ballast-heaving, the men were not so much employed by publicans and other tradesmen. A gang of men could then get work on their own account, a good deal easier than they can get it now through the tradesmen who supply the ballast. As the trade got more and more into the hands of the publicans and such-like, it grew worse and worse for such as me. We earned less, and were not anything like to call free men. Instead of my 1*l.* I had to stir myself to make 15*s.* or as low as 12*s.* a-week. Lately I have been what is called a casualty man. There's constant men and casualties. Each publican has a foreman to look out, and get men, and see after them. These foremen —all of them that I know of—keeps lodgers, charging them 2*s.* 6*d.* or 3*s.* a-week for a room they could get but for this tie, for 2*s.*—ay, that they could. Suppose now a publican has a ship to supply with ballast, he acquaints his foreman, and the foreman calls on his lodgers, and sets them to work. These are the constant men. They have always the first turn out of the house. If they return from work at 4, and there's another job at 5, they get it. That's interest you see, sir. The more such men earn this way, the more they're expected to spend with the publican. It's only bad stuff they have to drink at a full price. It's only when all the constant men are at work, and a job must be done at once, that me, and such as me, can get work. If I hear of a chance of a job I call on the foreman. If I have money, why, I must drink myself, and treat the foreman with a drop of gin, or what he fancies. If I haven't the money, I have the worse chance for a job. Suppose I get a job and earn 6*s.* out of 60 tons of ballast; out of that 6*s.* I may have 4*s.*, or, at most, 4*s.* 6*d.* to take home with me, after paying for what I must drink at the publican's —what I'm forced to spend. Casualty men have sad trouble to get any work. Those that belong to the houses have all the call. Last week I was on the look-out every day, and couldn't get a single job, nor earn a single farthing. Last night I had to get a bite of supper at my son's, and a bite of breakfast this morning as well, and I had to borrow a pair of shoes to come out in. The best week's work I've had this winter was 15*s.* I had five days in one ship. For that five days I was entitled, I fancy, to 20*s.*, or may be 21*s.*, so that the difference between that and the 15*s.* went for drink. I only wanted a pint of beer now and then at my work—two or three a day. The worst of it is, we don't get drink at our work so much as at the public-house we're employed from. If we want to go home, some of the constant men want to have more and more, and so the money goes. Other weeks I have carried home 10*s.*, 8*s.*, 5*s.*, and many a week nothing, living as I could. It would be a deal better for poor men, like me, if tradesmen had nothing to do with ballast work. If the men that did the work were paid by the gentlemen what wants the ballast, there might then be a living for a poor man. As it is, it's a very bad, hateful system, and makes people badly off. A ballast-man may sit in a tap-room, wet, and cold, and hungry, (I've felt it many a time,) and be forced to drink bad stuff, waiting to be paid. It always happens, unless they're about shutting up, that we have to wait. We have no sick-fund or benefit societies. I declare to you, that if anything happened to me—if I was sick—I have nothing to call my own but what I've on; and not all that, as I've told you—and there's nothing but the parish to look to. (Here the man somewhat shuddered.) I pay 2*s.* a-week rent.

"Then again, sir, there's the basket-men at the docks—all the docks. They're as bad to the poor man as the publican, or worse. The way they do is this. They're not in any trade, and they make it their business to go on board ships—foreign ships—American generally. In better times, twenty or twenty-five years ago, there used to be 1*s.*, and as high as 1*s.* 6*d.* paid for a ton from such ships to a gang of six ballast-men. I've earned six, seven, and eight shillings a-day myself then. We heaved the ballast out of the lighters with our shovels on to a stage, and from that it was heaved into the hold. Two men worked in the lighter, two on the stage, and two in the hold of the vessel. The basket-men manage to fill the hold now by heaving the ballast up from the lighter in baskets by means of a windlass. The basket-man contracts with the captain, and then puts us poor men at the lowest rate he can get; he picks them up anywhere, anything in the shape of men. For every half-crown he pays these men he'll get 9*s.* for himself, and more. An American liner may require 300 tons of ballast, and, maybe, a captain will give a basket-man 8*d.* a-ton: that would be 10*l.* The basket-man employs six men, and he makes another. He never works himself—never—not a blow: but he goes swaggering about the ship when his men are at work, and he's on the look-out in the streets at other times. For the 10*l.* he'll get for the 300 tons, he'll pay his men each 2*s.* 6*d.* for 60 tons, that is 3*l.* 15*s.*, and so there's 6*l.* 5*s.* profit for him. Isn't that a shame, when so many poor men have to go without dinner or breakfast? There's five basket-men to my knowledge. They are making money all out of poor men that can't help themselves. The poor suffers for all."

In order to assure myself of the intensity of the labour of ballast-heaving, of which I heard statements on all sides, I visited a gang of men at work, ballasting a collier in the Pool. My engagements prevented my doing this until about six in the evening. There was a very dense fog on the river, and all along its banks; so thick was it, indeed, that the water, which washed the steps where I took a boat, could not be distinguished, even with the help of the adjacent lights. I soon, however, attained the ballast-lighter I sought. The ballast-heavers had established themselves alongside a collier, to be filled with 43 tons of ballast, just before I reached them, so that I observed all their operations. Their first step was to tie pieces of old sail, or anything of that kind, round their shoes, ankles, and half up their legs, to prevent the gravel falling into their shoes, and so rendering their tread painful. This was rapidly done; and the men set to work with the quiet earnestness of those who are working for the morrow's meal, and who know that they must work hard. Two men stood in the gravel (the ballast) in the lighter; the other two stood on "a stage," as it is called, which is but a boarding placed on the partition-beams of the lighter. The men on this stage, cold as the night was, threw off their jackets, and worked in their shirts, their labour being not merely hard, but rapid. As one man struck his shovel into the ballast thrown upon the stage, the other hove his shovelful through a small porthole in the vessel's side, so that the work went on as continuously and as quickly as the circumstances could possibly admit. Rarely was a word spoken, and nothing was heard but an occasional gurgle of the water, and the plunging of the shovel into the gravel on the stage by one heaver, followed instantaneously by the rattling of the stones in the hold shot from the shovel of the other. In the hold the ballast is arranged by the ship's company. The throwing of the ballast through the porthole was done with a nice precision. A tarpaulin was fixed to prevent any of the ballast that might not be flung through the porthole being wasted by falling into the river, and all that struck merely the bounds of the porthole fell back into the lighter; but this was the merest trifle. The men pitched the stuff through most dexterously. The porthole might be six feet above the stage from which they hove the ballast; the men in the lighter have an average heave of six feet on to the stage. The two men on the stage and the two on the lighter fill and discharge their shovels twelve times in a minute; that is, one shovelful is shot by each man in every alternate five seconds; so that every one of the four men engaged at the work flings the height of 36 feet every minute, or 2160 feet in an hour; and in that time, according to the concurrent computation of the heavers, the four men may easily fling in 10 tons, or 5600 lbs. a man. The men work with the help of large lanterns, being employed mostly by night.

I shall now state the sentiments of the men generally, and then individually, upon the subject of their grievances.

To be certain as to the earnings of the men, to see their condition, and to hear from a large number of them their own statements as to the hardships they suffered, and the sums they gained, I met two bodies of the ballast-heavers, assembled without pre-arrangement. At one station 50 were present, at the other 30. The men were chiefly clad in coarse, strong jackets; some of them merely waistcoats, with strong, blue flannel sleeves, and coarse trowsers, thick with accumulated grease from long wear. They had, notwithstanding their privations, generally a hardy look. There was nothing squalid in their appearance, as in that of men who have to support life on similar earnings with in-door employment. Their manners were quiet, and far from coarse. At the first meeting 50 were present. One man said, "Well, I think I am the oldest man at present, and I don't get above 5*s.* a-week; but that's because I'm an old man, and cannot work with the young ones." Upon an average the common men earned 10*s.* a-week the year through, and took home 5*s.* I inquired, "Are you all compelled to spend a great part of all you earn in drink with the publican?" The answer was simultaneously, "All of us—all—all!" Of the remainder of their earnings, after the drink deductions, the men were all satisfied they spent so much, that many only took 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week home to their wives and families on an average. Last week two earned 20*s.*, the publican taking 10*s.* from each. Three earned 15*s.*; one of these took 1*s.* 6*d.* home, the other 3*s.*, both working for publicans; the third, who worked for a grocer, took home 13*s.*; the other 2*s.* being spent in tea and sugar, he being a single man. Three earned 10*s.*; one, working for a publican, carried home 6*s.*, the difference going in compulsory drink; another 4*s.*, and another 5*s.* Six did one load of ballast, receiving 7*s.* 6*d.* each for it; one took home 4*s.* 11*d.*; another 6*s.* 6*d.* (a private job); another, who did a load for 5*s.* 3*d.*, took home 2*s.* 3*d.*; the other two took home 5*s.* each. One man earned 3*s.*, and took it all home, having worked at *a*

private job for a foreigner. Fifteen earned nothing in the course of the last week. For the last fortnight nine had earned nothing. There were nine present that had earned something in the last three weeks. "The fortnight before Christmas," said one, "I didn't earn 5*s.* all that fortnight." "Nor I, nor I," said several others. On being asked, "Are you compelled to spend half of your earnings in drink?" there was a general cry of, "More than that, sir; more than that." I asked if men were forced to become drunkards under this system; there was a general cry of, "We are; and blackguards, too." Seventeen were married men. Of them, 3 had no children; 3 had one child; 4 had 2 children; 2 had 3; 3 had 4; one had 5; one had 6. The men all said, that to get away from the publican would be "a new life to them—all to their benefit—no force to waste money in drink—and the only thing that would do them good." Many threw away the drink they had from the publicans, it was so bad; they drank Thames water rather. They were all satisfied "they earned 10s. a-week the year through, spending of that sum what they *must* spend, and what they were induced to spend, from 5*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* a-week." "Another thing," they said, "if you get a job, the publican will advance 1*s.*—now and then he may. They hate to give money; there's trust for as much grog as you like." All hailed with delight the least possible chance of being freed from the publican. One man said he was compelled often enough to pawn something of his own or his wife's to go and spend it at the public-house, or he would have no chance of a job. All declare "such a system never was known to have been carried on for years." Many said, "We shall be discharged if they know we have told you the truth." They stated that the ballast-heavers numbered between 300 and 400. There were 60 craft, each requiring 4 heavers; and many men were idle when all the others were at work. Thirty were present when I counted the other meeting. A man said there might be three times that number looking for work then, and as many at work belonging to that station alone. In 1841 the census returns showed that there were 170 ballast-heavers; the men assembled declared that their numbers had more nearly trebled than doubled since then. Within the last two or three years many new hands had got to work, on account of the distress in Ireland. The men agreed with the others I had seen that they earned, one week with another, 10*s.*, taking home but 5*s.* at the outside, and often only 2*s.* 6*d.* In answer to my questions they said, the winter is the best season; the trade is very slack in summer. Earnings in winter are pretty well double what they are in summer. Many agricultural labourers work among the heavers in winter, when they cannot be employed on the land. Of this body all said they were sober men till they took to ballast-heaving, and would like to become sober men again. (A general assent.) Three of the men had taken the pledge before becoming ballast-heavers, and were obliged to break it to get work. They had to drink five pots of beer, they declared, where, if they were free men, they would only drink one. When asked if the present system made drunkards, they answered with one voice, "All; every ballast-heaver in it." Twenty were married men. All their wives and children suffered (this was affirmed generally with a loud murmur), and often had nothing to eat or drink while their husbands had but the drink. It was computed (with general concurrence) that 150 ballast-heavers paid foremen for lodgings, not half of them ever seeing the bed they paid for. About twelve years ago they could earn twice or three times as much as they can now; but prices were higher (12*s.* per score, for what is now 8*s.*), and the men were far less numerous. The following is a precise statement of the sums to which each ballast-heaver present was entitled, followed by the amount he had carried home the week before, after payment of his compulsory drinkings, and of what he might be induced to drink at the house of his employer while waiting to be paid:—

Earned.	Took home.
£0 12 0	£0 7 6
0 7 0	0 3 6
0 15 0	0 9 0
0 12 0	0 6 0
0 13 0	0 4 0
0 11 0	0 5 0
0 5 0	0 2 6
0 8 0	0 5 0
0 9 6	0 5 0
1 0 0	0 10 0
0 12 6	0 3 6
1 0 0	0 9 0
0 12 0	0 4 0
0 15 0	0 9 0
0 15 0	0 8 6
0 16 0	0 6 0
0 15 0	0 5 0
Nothing	Nothing
"	"
"	"
"	"
0 12 0	0 2 6
0 9 0	0 5 0
1 0 0	0 4 6
1 0 0	0 10 0
0 10 0	0 3 0
0 10 0	0 5 0
0 12 0	0 2 6
0 8 0	0 3 6
0 14 0	6 9 0
£16 13 0	£7 7 0

This statement shows, out of 11*s.* 1½*d.* earnings, a receipt of less than 5*s.* a-week.

According to the returns of the Trinity House, there were 615,619 tons of ballast put on board 11,234 ships in the year 1848. The ballast-heavers are paid at the rate of 6*d.* per ton for shovelling the ballast out of the Trinity Company's lighters into the holds of vessels. Hence, the total earnings of the ballast-heavers in that year were 15,390*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* And calculating two-thirds (the men say they always get rid of a half, and often three-fourths, of their earnings in drink) of this sum to have been spent in liquor, it follows that as much as 10,260*l.* 6*s.* 4*d.* went to the publican, and only 5,130*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.* to the labouring men. According to this estimate of their gross earnings, if we calculate the body of the ballast-heavers as numbering 350 men, the average wages of the class are about 16*s.* 6*d.* per week each man; or if we reckon the class at 400, then the average wages of each person would be about 14*s.* 6*d.* per week. From all I can learn this appears to be about the truth—the earnings of the men being about 15*s.* a-week, and their real income about 5*s.*

The men shall now speak for themselves.

The first that I saw were two of the better class of foremen, who volunteered to give me an account of the system.

"I am a foreman or ganger of the ballast-heavers," said one. "I work under a man who is a publican and butcher; and I also work under another who is only a butcher. I, moreover, work under a grocer. I engage the different gangs of men for the parties under whom I work. I also pay the men. The publican, butcher, or grocer, as the case may be, agrees to give me 9*s.* a score tons. The foremen often give the men the same money as they themselves receive, barring a pot of beer or a quartern of gin that they may have out of the job. Some foremen take much more."

Another foreman, who was present while I was taking the statement of this man, here observed, that "Many foremen claim tow-tow, or a 'fifth-handed' proportion—that is, they will have 10*s.* when the working-men have only 5*s.* There is a great deal of imposition on the working-classes here, I can assure you; the general thing, when we go to a job out of a public-house is, that the publican expects the men to drink to the amount of 4*s.* out of every 1*l.*, and 6*s.* out of every 30*s.* that's coming to them—that is, one-fifth part of the men's money must be spent in liquor. The drink is certainly not the best; indeed, if there is any inferior stuff they have it: it's an obligation on them that they drink. If they refuse to drink, they won't get employed, and that's the plain truth of it. Oh, it's long wanted looking to; and I'm glad at last to find some one inquiring into it. If they went to get the regular beer from the fair public-houses they would have to pay 3*d.* a pot for it; and at the contracting publicans' they must give 4*d.* a pot, and have short measure, and the worst of stuff too. Every six pots of beer they give to the men is only five pots fair measure; and the rum they charge them 2*d.* half-a-pint more than the regular public-houses would, and far worse rum into the bargain. Besides the profit on their drink, some publicans charge 6*d.* per score tons as well. Out of the money coming to the men after the publican has been paid his score, many foremen claim one-fifth part over and above their regular share; or, in other words, the foremen takes two shares, and the men only one each. When the men have been paid, the publican paying them expects them to spend a further sum in drink, looking black at the man who goes away without calling for his pint or his pot, and not caring if they drink away the whole of their earnings. There's a good many would be glad if the men sat in their houses and spent their last farthing, and then had to go home penniless to their wives and families."

"I am a 'ganger' to a butcher as well as a publican," said one of the foremen. "His practice is just the same as the publican's. He receives 10*s.* per score tons, and pays me for the men 9*s.* The men and myself are all expected to spend about one-half of our earnings with the butcher in meat. He charges 6½*d.* per lb.; and at other houses, with ready money, I and the men might get it for 4*d.* as good. His meat is at least one-third dearer than other butchers'. I am also ganger to a grocer, and he gets about the same profit out of the men he employs—that is to say, the articles he supplies the men with are at least one-third dearer than at other shops. If anything, he makes more out of the men than the butcher; for if any man goes a score (which he always encourages) he stops the whole out the man's earnings, and often leaves him without a penny after the job is done. When the publican, grocer, butcher, or lodging-house keeper has a contract for ballast, he directs the foreman working under him to get together the gang that regularly work from his house. This gang are men who always deal at the shop, and the contractor would dismiss me if I was to engage any other men than those who were his regular customers. Many a time a publican has told me that some man was a good, hard drinker, and directed me to engage him whenever I could. If a man sticks up a score, he also tells me to put him on first of all: the grocer and the butcher do the same. This system is the cause, I know, of much distress and misery among the men; the publicans make the men drunkards by forcing them to drink. I know many wives and children who starve half their time through it. They haven't a bit of shoe or clothing, and all through the publican compelling the men to spend their earnings in drink. After the gang is paid, at least three out of the four get drunk; and, often, the whole four. Many a time I have seen the whole of the men reel-

ing home without a penny to bless themselves, and the wife and children have to suffer for all this; they are ill-treated and half-starved: this I can safely say from my own knowledge."

I next saw two men, who stated that they were oppressed by the publican, and the foreman also. The first said, "I work under a publican, and have to pay the foreman one-fifth of my earnings; I only have fourpence out of every shilling I earn, and I must be a sober man indeed to get that. Both the publican and the foreman get eightpence out of a shilling, and make their money out of my sweat. Nine years ago I was left, to my sorrow, with nine motherless children, and I am the slave of the publican. He is my destruction, and such are my sufferings, that I don't care what I do if I can destroy the system: I shall die happy if I can see an end to it. I would go to bed supperless to-night, and so should my children, if I could stop it. After I have had a job of work, many's the time I have not had a penny to take home to my children, it has all gone betwixt the foreman and the publican; and what is more, if I had brought anything home I should have stood a worse chance of work the next day. If I had gone away with sixpence in my pocket, the work that should have come to me would have gone to those who had spent all in the house. I can solemnly say that the men are made regular drunkards by the publicans. I am nine-and-twenty years dealing with this oppression, and I wish from my heart I could see an end to it, for the sake of my children and my fellow-creatures' children as well. But I suffer quite as much from the foreman as I do from the publican. I am obliged to treat him before I can get a job of work. The man who gives him the most drink he will employ the first. Besides this, the foreman has two-fifth parts of the money paid for the job; he has twice as much as the men if he does any of the work; and if he does none of the work he takes one-fifth of the whole money: besides this, the men do three times the foreman's labour. If I could get the full value of my sweat, I could lay by to-morrow, and keep my family respectably. In the room of that, now, my family want bread often—worse luck, for it hurts my feelings. I have been idle all to-day; for hearing of this, I came to make my statement, for it was the pride of my heart to do all that I could to put an end to the oppression. The publicans have had the best of me, and when the system is done away with I shan't be much the better for it. I have been nine-and-twenty years at it, and it has ruined me both body and soul; but I say what I do for the benefit of others, and those who come after me."

The other man said that he worked under a publican, and a grocer as well, and lodged with a foreman. "I pay 2*s.* a week for my lodgings," he said; "there are two beds in the room, and two men in each. The room where we all sleep is not more than seven feet long by five feet wide, and barely seven feet high. There is no chimney in it. It is a garret, with nothing in it but the two beds. There hadn't need be much more, for it wouldn't hold even a chair besides. There's hardly room, in fact, for the door to open. I find it very close sleeping there at night-time, with no ventilation, but I can't help myself. I stay there for the job of work. I must stay; I shouldn't get a day's work if I didn't. The lodgings are so bad, I'd leave them to-morrow if I could. I know I pay twice as much as I could get them for elsewhere. That's one way in which I, for one, am robbed. Besides this, I am obliged to treat the foreman; I am obliged to give him two glasses of rum, as well as lodging at his house, in order to get employment. I have also to drink at the public-house; one-fifth of my money is kept, first and foremost, by the publican. That goes for the compulsory drink—for the swash which he sends us on board, and that we think the Thames-water is sweet and wholesome to it. It is expressly adulterated for our drink. If we speak a word against it we should be left to walk the streets, for a week and more forward. Even if we were known to meet a friend, and have a pint or a pot in another public-house, we should be called to an account for it by the publican we worked under, and he would tell us to go and get work where we spent our money; and, God knows, very little money we would have coming out of his house after our hard sweat. After the compulsory drink, and the publican has settled with us, and his fifth part of our hard-earned money for the swash—it's nothing else—that he has given us to drink, then I should be thought no man at all if I didn't have two pots of beer, or half-a-pint of gin, so that I would count myself very lucky indeed if I had a couple of shillings to take home, and out of that I should have to spend two-thirds of it to get another job. I am a married man, and my wife and three children are in Ireland. I can't have them over, for it is as much as I can do to support myself. I came over here thinking to get work, and to send them money to bring them over after me, but since I have been here I have been working at the ballast-work, and I have not been able to keep myself. I don't complain of what is paid for the work; the price is fair enough; but we don't get a quarter of what we earn, and the Irish ballast-heavers suffer more here than in their own country. When I came over here I had a good suit of clothes to my back, and now I'm all in rags and tatters, and yet I have been working harder, and earning more money, that I did in all my life. We are robbed of all we get by the foremen and publicans. I was eight years a teetotaler before I went to ballast-work, and now I am forced to be a drunkard, to my sorrow, to get a job of work. My wife and children have a bit of land in Ireland to keep them, and they're badly off enough, God knows. I can neither help them, nor send money to bring them over to me; nor can I get over to them myself. The grocers whom we work under rob us in the same manner. I have worked under one. He supplied bread, butter, tea, sugar, coffee, candles, tobacco, cheese, &c. It is a larger kind of chandlers' shop. He charges us 5½*d.* for the same bread as I can buy for 4½*d.* at other shops. The tea, sugar, and other articles he supplies us with are at the same rate; they are either worse or dearer than at other shops. They generally manage to get a fifth part of our earnings wherever we go; but the grocers are best of all, for they don't ruin our health, as what they give us don't make us sick. I work for these two houses because the foreman that I lodge with has work out of both houses, and we are obliged to deal at the houses that he works under; if we didn't we shouldn't get the job, so that if we are not robbed by the publican we are by the grocer. They will have it out of the poor hard-working man, and the foreman must have the gain out of it as well. I only wish to God it was done away with, for it is downright oppression to us all, and if I never have another stroke of work I will strive all I can to have it done away with for the sake of my fellow-men.

After these two cases came one who said,—"I have been three years a ballast-heaver. Just before that I came to this country. When I came I got to be a lodger with a foreman to a publican. I paid him 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week. My family, a wife and two children, came over when I had got work as a ballast-heaver. I couldn't take them to the lodgings I then had; they were all for single men: so I had to take another place, and there I went to live with my family; but to keep my work I had to pay the foreman of the publican—him that lets these lodgings to the ballast-heaver—2*s.* 6*d.* a-week all the same as if I had been living there. That I had, and I had to do it for two years. Yes, indeed. I didn't earn enough to pay for two lodgings, so two or three months back I refused to pay the 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week for a place I hadn't set my foot in for two years, and so I lost my work under that foreman and his publican. If me and my children was starving for want of a bite of bread, neither of them would give me a farthing. There's plenty as bad as them, too, and plenty used like me, and it's a murdering shame to tax poor men's labour for nothing."

This man reiterated the constant story of being compelled to drink against his will, hating the stuff supplied to him, being kept for hours waiting before he was paid, and being forced to get drunk, whether he would or no. The man also informed me that he now works under a butcher, who pays 8*s.* a score to the hands he employs, he (the butcher) receiving from the captain 10*s.*

"Suppose," he said, "I have a 60-ton job, I'd be entitled to 7*s.* 6*d.* without beer, or such-like; but under this butcher I get only 5*s.* 3*d.*, and out of that 5*s.* 3*d.*—that's all I get in hard money—I'm expected to spend 4*s.* or thereabouts in meat, such as he chooses to give. I have no choice; he gives what he likes, and charges me 6½*d.* a-pound for what I could buy at 4*d.* in a regular way. Very inferior stuff he keeps. Working under a butcher, we must all live on this poor meat. We can't afford bread or vegetables to it."

This same butcher, I was afterwards informed, had been twice fined for using false weights to customers, such as the man whose statement I have given; he even used wooden weights made to look like lead.

The following is an instance of the injustice done to the men by those who contract to whip rather than to heave the ballast on board.

"I now work," said the man, whom I was referred to as an exponent of the wrong, "for Mr. ——, a publican who contracts to supply ships with ballast by the lump. He'll contract to supply a ship with all the ballast she'll want by the lump—that is, so much money for all she wants, instead of so much by the ton; or he may contract with a ship at 2*s.* 6*d.* a-ton. We—that is a gang of eight men—may put two loads or 120 tons on board in the course of a day. For those 120 tons he will receive 120 half-crowns, that's 15*l.* For putting in those 120 tons we—that is, the eight ballast-heavers employed—receive 2*s.* 6*d.* a-day of 12 or 14 hours; that is 8 half-crowns or 20 shillings, with 3*s.* 6*d.* a-day for a basket-man, in addition to the eight, so leaving the publican a profit of 13*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.*" I could hardly believe in the existence of such a system—yielding a mere pittance to the labourer, and such an enormous profit to the contractor, and I inquired further into the matter. I found the statement fully corroborated by many persons present; but that was not all I learned. When the men, by incessant exertion, get in 120 tons in a day, as they often do, nothing is charged them for the beer they have had, four or five pints a-day each; but if only 60 tons be got in, as sometimes happens, through the weather and other circumstances, then the men employed on the half-a-crown a-day must pay for their own beer and pay their private score for treating a friend, or the like. "There's no chance of a job," said my informant; "not a bit of it." He continued: "Very bad drink it is—the worst—it makes me as sick as a dog. There's two brothers there what they call blood-hounds; they're called so because they hunt up the poor men to get them to work, and to see that they spend their money at their employer's public-house when work's

done. If you don't spend something, no bread to cut the next morning—not a bit of it—and no chance of another job there. He employs us ballast-heavers, when we are not at the ballast, in backing coals into the steamers."

I have given the statement of a ballast-heaver as to the system pursued by those whom he called basket-men. The employer here alluded to is one of that class, the difference being, that the ballast-heavers shovel the ballast out of the lighter on to the stage, and from the stage through a port-hole into the hold. Four men are thus employed, two on the lighter, and two on the stage. With a large ship five men are employed, and two stages. When the basket-man or the man contracting by the lump is employed, this process is observed:—There are two men in the lighter alongside the vessel to be ballasted, whose business it is to fill five baskets. There are five men at the winch aboard ship employed heaving up these baskets, and a basket-man to turn them over and empty out their contents.

To ascertain that there was no provident fund—no provision whatever for sickness—I investigated the case of a man who, in consequence of illness occasioned by his trade, was afflicted with a pulmonary complaint. This man was formerly one of the wine-cellarmen in the London Dock; he was then made a permanent man at the St. Katherine's Dock, and was dismissed for having taken a lighted pipe in while at his work; and for the last fourteen years and upwards he has been a ballast-heaver. I now give his wife's statement:—"My husband has been ill for three months, and he has been six weeks in Guy's Hospital, and I am afraid he'll never get out again, for he kept up as long as he could for the sake of the children. We have five at home; one of them (twelve years old) I hope to get to sea, having two older sons at sea, and being the mother of twelve children altogether. I will tell you what led to my poor husband's illness; he was a kind husband to me. I consider it was his hard work that made him ill, and his not getting his rights—not his money when entitled to it. After doing a heavy day's work he had to go and sit in a cold tap-room, drinking bad beer; but it wasn't beer—muck, I call it—and he had to wait to be paid, ay, and might have had to wait till the day after, and then come home cold and have to go to bed without a bit of victuals. His illness is owing to that; no horse could stand it long. Ballast-men are worse than slaves in the West Indies. When at work he earned what the others did. He only drank what he couldn't help—the worst of stuff. No drink, no work. Six weeks ago she went to the hospital, I conveying him. When I returned home I found three strange men had turned my four children into the street, doing it in a brutal way. I rushed into the house, and one said, 'Who are you?' I seized the fellow who said this by the handkerchief, and put him out. One of them said, 'Be off, you old Irish hag, you have no business here; we have possession.' When I saw the children in the street, passion made me strong, and so I put him out. The collector of the rent, who employed the broker, is a publican, for whom my husband worked as a ballast-heaver until he was unable to work from illness. I was given into custody for an assault, and taken before Mr. Yardley. He considered the assault proved, and as an honest woman I couldn't deny it, and so I had fourteen days with bread and water. The children were placed in the workhouse, where they were well treated. I was very glad they were so taken care of. As soon as I got out I went to see about my children; that was the first thing I did. I couldn't rest till I did that. I brought them home with me, though it was only to bread and water, but I was with them. I only owed about 15*s.* rent, and had been four years in the house at the time the publican put the broker in. We paid 6*s.* 6*d.* a-week; it was no use asking such a man as that any mercy. He was in the habit of employing ballast-heavers for many years; and if that doesn't harden a man's heart, nothing will. In general these ballast publicans are cruel and greedy. At present I go out washing or charing, or doing anything I can to maintain my children, but work's very slack. I've had a day and a-half this fortnight, earning 2*s.* 6*d.*, that's all for a fortnight; the parish allows me four loaves of bread a-week. The children, all boys, just get what keeps a little life in them. They have no bed at night, and are starved almost to death, poor things. I blame the system under which my husband had to work—his money going in drink—for leaving me destitute in the world. On Christmas-day we lived on a bit of workhouse bread—nothing else, and had no fire to eat it by. But for the money gone in drink we might have had a decent home, and wouldn't so soon have come to this killing poverty. I have been tenderly reared, and never thought I should have come to this. May God grant the system may be done away with, for poor people's sake."

I now give the statement of two women, the wives of ballast-heavers, that I may further show how the wives and families of these men are affected by the present system.

"I have been 11 years married," said one, "and have had five children, four being now living."

The other woman had been married 23 years, but has no children living.

"We are very badly off," said the woman with a family, "my husband drinking hard. When I first knew him—when we were sweethearts in a country part of Ireland—he was a farm-labourer and I was a collier's daughter, he was a sober and well-behaved man. Two years after we were married, and he was a sober man those two years still. We came to London to better ourselves, worse luck. The first work he got was ballast-heaving. Then he was obligated to drink or he couldn't get work; and so, poor man, he got fond of it. This winter oft enough he brings me and the children home 2*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* after a job; and on that we may live for two or three days,—we're half starved, in course. The children have nothing to eat. It's enough to tear any poor woman's heart to pieces. What's gone into the publican's till would get the children bread, and bedding, and bits of clothes. Nothing but his being employed at ballast-heaving made him a drunkard, for he *is* a drunkard now. He often comes home and ill-uses me, but he doesn't ill-use the children. He beats me with his fists; he strikes me in the face; he has kicked me. When he was a sober man he was a kind, good husband; and when he's sober now, poor man, he's a kind, good husband still. If he was a sober man again with his work, I'd be happy and comfortable to what I am now. Almost all his money goes in drink."

"We can't get shoes to our feet," said the second woman.

"When my husband is sober and begins to think," (continued the first,) "he wishes he could get rid of such a system of drinking,—he really does wish it, for he loves his family, but when he goes out to work he forgets all that. It's just the drink that does it. I would like him to have a fair allowance at his work, he requires it; and beyond that it's all waste and sin: but he's forced to waste it, and to run into sin, and so we all have to suffer. We are often without fire. Much in the pawn-shop do you say, sir? Indeed I haven't much out."

"We," interposed the elder woman, "haven't a stitch but what's in pawn except what wouldn't be taken. We have 50*s.* worth in pawn altogether—all for meat and fire."

"I can't, I daren't," the younger woman said, "expect anything better while the present system of work continues. My husband's a slave, and we suffer for it."

The elder woman made a similar statement. After his score is paid, she said, her husband has brought her 4*s.*, 3*s.*, 2*s.*, 1*s.*, and often nothing, coming home drunk with nothing at all. Both women stated that the drink made their husbands sick and ill, and for sickness there was no provision whatever. They could have taken me to numbers of women situated and used as they were. The rooms are four bare walls, with a few pieces of furniture and bedding such as no one would give a penny for. The young woman was perfectly modest in manner, speech, and look, and spoke of what her husband was and still might be with much feeling. She came to me with a half-clad and half-famished child in her arms.

I then took, for the sake of avoiding repetition, the statements of two ballast-heavers together—*constant men*—working under different publicans. The account they gave me of the way in which the publicans contracted to ballast a ship was the same as I have given elsewhere.

"I have been twenty years a ballast-heaver," said one, "and all that time I have worked for a publican, and haven't a coat to my back. Twenty years ago the publicans had the same number of hands, but had more work for them, and I might then earn 20*s.* a-week; but I couldn't fetch that home from the publican. He expected me to spend one-half of my earnings with him; and when I left his house drunk, I might spend the other half. I've drunk gallons of drink against my will. I've drunk stuff that was poison to me. I turned teetotaler about six months ago, and the publican, my employer, *sacked* me when he found it out, saying, 'He'd be d——d if he'd have such men as me—he didn't make his living by teototalers.'"

"Yes," added the other man, "and so *my* publican told me; for I turned teetotaler myself somewhere about seven years ago, and took the pledge from Father Mathew in the Commercial-road. The publican told me, that if Father Mathew chose to interfere with me, why Father Mathew might get employment for me, for he—that's the publican—wouldn't. So I was forced to break my pledge to live—me and my youngsters—I had six then, and I've buried two since."

"Work," resumed the man who first gave me the statement, "keeps getting worse. Last week I carried only 8*s.* home, and if I'd got paid by the captain of the ship for the amount of work I did, and on the same terms as the publican, I should have taken home at the very least 16*s.* The publican that employs us gives us only 8*s.* a-score, and receives 10*s.* from the captain. All the publicans don't do this; some give what they get from the captain, but some publicans takes two-thirds, and that's the truth. (The second man assented.) One week with another I've taken home, this winter, from 12*s.* to 13*s.*, and but for this shameful starvation system, having to work for a publican's profit, and to drink his drink, I'd take home my 20*s.* every week. It makes a man feel like a slave; indeed, I'm not much better. We should be in heaven if we got away from the publican or butcher either; it's compulsion one's life through. Some of the publicans have as many as sixty single men lodging in their houses, paying half-a-crown a-week: ay, and men that don't lodge with them, when the house is full, must pay half-a-crown all the same, to get a job of work, as well as paying for the places where they do lodge."

The first man continued:—

"The gin and rum is the worst that can be supplied; but we must drink it or waste it. We often spill it on the ballast, it's

that bad"—["Often, often," was the response of the other man.] "And that's not the worst. When we get a job of putting sixty tons of ballast on board, we are forced to take six pots of beer with us to our work; but only four pots are supplied, and we must pay for six. We are robbed on every side. I cannot describe how bad it is; a man would hardly believe it; but all will tell you the same—all the men like us." [So, indeed, the poor fellows did afterwards.] "When we call to be paid, we are kept for hours in a cold tap-room, forced to drink cold stuff without being let have a strike of fire to take the chill off it."

The other man then made a further statement.

"I've been forced to put my sticks in pawn—what I had left—for I was better off once, though I was always a ballast-heaver and have worked for the same publican fourteen years. I have 3*l.* in pawn now, I blame this present system for being so badly off—sorrow a thing else! Now just look at this: A single man, a lodger, will go into a publican's and call for 1*s.* worth of rum, and the publican will call me a scaly fellow, if I don't do the same; that will be when I'd rather be without his rum, if I got it for nothing." One publican (the men gave me this account concurrently, and it was fully confirmed by a host of others,) married the niece of a waterman employed to pull the harbour-master about the river. He kept a public-house, and carried on the system of lodgers for ballast-heaving, making a great deal of money out of them; by this means he got so much work at his command, that the rest of the publicans complained to the harbour-master, and the man was forced to give up his public-house. When he had to give it up he made it over to his niece's husband, and that man allowed him 1*s.* for every ship he brought him to ballast. I've known him—that's the publican that succeeded the man I've been telling you of—have 40 ships in a day: one week with another he has had 100 ships; that's 5*l.*, and he has them still. It's the same now. We've both worked for him. His wife's uncle (the harbour-master's waterman) says to the captains, and he goes on board to see them after the harbour-master's visit to them,—Go to ——; get your ballast of him, and I'll give you the best berth in the river.'"

I next obtained an interview with a young man who was the victim of a double extortion. He made the following statement:—

"I work under a publican, and lodge in his house. I have done so for five years. I pay 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week, there being ten of us in two rooms. We're all single men. These two rooms contain four beds, three in the larger room and one in the other. We sleep two in a bed, and should have to sleep three in some; only two of the men don't occupy the lodgings they pay for. The bigger room may be 16 feet by 10; the smaller about a quarter that size. You cannot turn in it—the bed cannot be brought out of the room without being taken to pieces. We must cook in the tap-room, which is a room for the purpose; it contains forms and an old table, with a large grate. We are found fryingpans and gridirons, and pans, and fire, and candle; but we must find our own knives and forks. The room is shamefully dirty—I mean the tap (cooking) room. It looks as if it hadn't been washed for years. It's never been washed to my knowledge. The bed-rooms are very little better. The bedding is very bad—a flock bed, with a pair of blankets and quilt, and a sort of sheet clean once a-fortnight. There's very bad ventilation and very unpleasant smells. It's a horrid den altogether. None of us would stop there if we could help it—but we can't help it, for if we leave we get no work. We are forced to find locks for our rooms, to keep our bits of things from being stolen. One man was robbed; my clothes was in the box with his; the box was broken open, but the clothes was left, and a few halfpence put away in the box was taken. There's lots of bugs; we can only sleep after hard work, and we must drink when we're at work. I've poured my beer into the river many a time, it was so bad—it tasted poisonous. We've drank Thames water rather than the bad beer we're all forced to drink. To show how we're treated I'll tell you this: I owe so much, and so much a week's stopped to pay it; but it never gets less, I am always charged the same. There it is, the same figures are on the slate, keep paying, paying off as you will. They won't rub it off, or if they do rub it off it's there again the next time. Only last week a man was discharged for grumbling, because he objected to paying twice over. He hasn't had a day's work since."

Then came one who was the *employé* of a publican and grocer. He said:

"I work under a publican and grocer. I'm any man's man. I stand with my fingers in my mouth at Ratcliff-cross watching, and have done it these last nine years. Half of us is afraid to come and speak to you. When I volunteered, the big-whiskered and fat-faced men (foremen) were looking at me and threatening me for coming to you. No matter. I care for nobody. Worse nor I am I can't be. No more I can't. I go to one publican's to work 60 tons, and for that I get 4*s.*, but 6*s.* is my rights. The remainder 2*s.* is left—I'm forced to leave it—for me to drink out on Sunday night. If I was in a fair house the publican would pay me 7*s.* 6*d*; as it is I get 4*s.* and 2*s.* must be drunk,—it's the rule at that house—he's in opposition and works low. If I was at liberty it wasn't to his house I'd go for a drink. The hardest-drinking man gets work first, and when a man's drunk he doesn't care what stuff he puts into his belly. Before we go to a job the four of us are expected to drink half-a-pint of rum or gin; the publicans expect it. If I was a teetotaler I must pay my whack and the other men may drink it, for the score against the ship is divided among the men equal.

"Suppose two foremen were to meet and have a drop of rum or brandy together, and a little talk about a ship's ballast, that's charged to us poor fellows—it's stuck up to us—but we mustn't say nothing, though we know we never had a sup of it; but if we say a word it's all up—no more work.

"Once on a time I worked for a publican close by here, and when I came to the house I had nothing to drink. My oldest mate whispered to me as we were on our way from the London Dock, and told me to speak my mind, for he knew there was a false score chalked against the ship; and the others was afraid to say a word. Well, I did speak when I got into the house, and the foreman was there, and he asked me what business I had to speak more than another? There was 6*s.* charged to the score for drink that we never touched or ever saw,—not a sup of it. He—that's the foreman—told me I shouldn't go to finish the ship; I said I would, in spite of him. I told the missus I expected she wouldn't give any more drink but what we had ourselves, or would get when we came home; and she said she wouldn't; and that's two years ago; but I haven't had a job from them parties since.

"Suppose I get to the public-house for my money at six in the evening, I am forced to wait there till eleven, until I am drunk very often—drunk from vexation; stopt when I'm hungry after five or six hours' work on the river, and not let take the money home to my wife and family, nor let have anything to eat, for I'm waiting for that money to get a bit of grub; but when I'm half drunk the hunger goes off just for a time. I must go and drink in a morning if my children go without breakfast, and starve all day till I come home at night. I can get nothing from my employers but *drink*. If I ask them for a shilling I can't get it. I've finished my load of ballast without breaking my fast but on the beer we're forced to take with us.

"I've found grocers better to work under than publicans,—there's a great deal more honesty in them. They charge a middling fair price; but they'll have tow-row out of it,—that's dry money—so much a score. They'll stop 6*d.* a score only for giving us a job. I can get as good sugar as I get of them at 4*d.* for 3½*d.*; but then the difference between the grocer and publican is, that the wife and family can have a bit of something to eat under the grocer, but not under the publican. All goes in drink with the publican; but we cannot carry drink home. When I go home drunk from the publican's, I tumble on the floor, perhaps, and say, 'Is there anything to eat for me?' and my old woman says, 'Where's the money? give me that and I'll give you something to eat.' Then a man gets mad with vexation, and the wife and children runs away from him; they are glad to get away with their lives, they're knocked about so. It makes a man mad with vexation to see a child hungry,—it kills me; but what the foreman gives me I *must* take; I dare never say no. If I get nothing—if all is gone in drink—I must go from him with a blithe face to my starving children, or I need never go back to him for another job."

I shall now set forth as fully as possible the nature of the system by which the ballast-heaver is either forced by the fear of losing all chance of future employment, or induced by the hope of obtaining the preference of work from the publican, his employer, to spend at least one half of his earnings every week in intoxicating drinks. Let me, however, before proceeding directly to the subject of my present communication, again lay before the reader the conclusions which I lately drew from the Metropolitan Police returns for 1848, concerning the intemperance of the labouring classes of London. It is essential that I should first prove the fact, and show its necessary consequences. This done, the public will be more ready to perceive the cause, and to understand that until this and similar social evils are removed, it is worse than idle to talk of "the elevation of the masses," and most unjust, to use the mildest term, to condemn the working men for sins into which they are positively forced. To preach about the virtues of tectotalism to the poor, and yet to allow a system to continue that compels them to be drunk before they can get work—not to say bread—is surely a mockery. If we would really have the industrious classes sober and temperate men, we must look first, it seems, to their *employers*. We have already seen that the intemperance of the coal-labourer is the fault of the employer, rather than the man; but we have only to go among the ballast-labourers to find the demoralization of the working man arising, not from any mere passive indifference, but from something like a positive conspiracy on the part of the master.

According to the criminal returns for the metropolis, there were 9197 males and 7264 females, making altogether a total of 16,461 individuals, charged with drunkenness in the year 1848. This makes one in every 110 individuals in London a drunkard—a proportion which, large as it seems, is still less than one-half what it was some ten or fifteen years back.

For the sake of comparison I subjoin, in the following page, a Table, taken from the Government Report on Drunkenness; being a return of the number of charges of drunkenness which have been entered upon the books of the Metropolitan Police in the years 1831,

NUMBER OF CHARGES OF DRUNKENNESS EACH YEAR IN THE YEARS 1831, 1832, 1833.

Locality of each Division.	No. of Officers employed in each Division.	Computed Population in each Division, according to the Parliamentary Returns.	1831.			1832.			1833.			Public-Houses and Beer-Shops in each Division.		
			Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Public Houses.	Beer-Shops.	Total.
A. Whitehall....	120	6,238	406	230	636	384	243	627	371	228	599	32	5	37
B. Westminster .	168	53,147	1,596	800	2,396	1,829	831	2,660	1,864	1,193	3,057	186	58	244
C. St. James's ..	188	105,862	2,290	1,127	3,417	2,119	1,055	3,174	2,908	1,256	3,164	202	20	222
D. St.Marylebone	166	122,206	1,375	727	2,102	1,300	650	1,950	1,019	605	1,624	148	54	202
E. Holborn	168	75,241	1,785	1,079	2,864	1,241	807	2,138	879	618	1,497	249	19	268
F. Covent Garden	168	41,010	2,238	1,555	3,793	2,165	1,617	3,782	1,665	1,388	3,053	309	28	332
G. Finsbury	236	115,266	2,141	1,423	3,564	2,192	1,440	3,632	1,916	1,270	3,186	368	100	468
H. Whitechapel .	191	119,042	1,253	812	2,065	1,631	1,268	2,899	1,803	1,295	3,098	359	102	461
K. Stepney	296	143,137	899	574	1,473	1,387	732	2,119	1,125	762	1,887	437	131	568
L. Lambeth	191	101,561	1,732	1,271	3,003	1,581	1,234	2,815	1,291	944	2,235	183	70	153
M. Southwark ..	189	107,537	1,655	1,050	2,705	1,470	983	2,452	1,284	843	2,127	321	66	387
N. Islington	269	140,407	850	373	1,223	1,165	573	1,738	826	409	1,235	267	144	311
P. Camberwell ..	243	77,825	256	87	343	201	75	276	203	80	283	138	96	234
R. Greenwich ..	212	58,778	363	137	500	513	240	753	418	210	628	283	51	334
S. Hampstead ..	223	112,136	573	301	874	613	326	939	607	319	1,016	138	74	212
T. Kensington ..	184	70,296	124	24	148	303	109	412	464	137	601	220	93	313
V. Wandsworth .	186	62,039	212	35	247	210	60	270	235	55	290	133	76	209
Total..	3,308	1,511,728	19,748	11,605	31,353	20,364	12,332	32,696	18,208	11,612	29,880	4,073	1,187	5,155

1832, and 1833, with the number of officers employed in, and the locality of, each division: also the amount of population in each, according to the Parliamentary returns of 1831.

Now, comparing these returns with those of the year before last, we find that the decrease of intemperance in the metropolis has been most extraordinary. In the year 1831, 1 in every 48 individuals was drunk; in 1832 the number increased to 1 in 46; whereas in 1833 it decreased to 1 in 50; and in 1848 the average had again fallen to 1 individual to every 110. This decrease of intemperance was attended with a similar decrease in the number of metropolitan beer-shops. In 1833 there were 1182, and in 1848 only 779 beer-shops in London. Whether this decrease preceded or succeeded, and so was the cause or the consequence of the increased sobriety of the people, it is difficult to say. The number of public-houses in London, however, had increased during the same period from 4073 to 4275. Upon the cause and effect of this I leave others to speculate.

Of the total, 16,461 persons, male and female, who were charged with being intoxicated in the year 1848, no less than one individual in every seven belonged to the labouring class: and, excluding the females from the number, we shall find that, of the males, every fourth individual that was taken up for drunkenness was a labouring man. Taking the whole population of London, temperate and intemperate, only 1 in every 110 is a drunkard; but with the labouring classes the average is as high as 1 in every 22. Of course, where the habit of drinking is excessive, we may expect to find also excessive pugnacity. That it is the tendency of all intoxicating liquors to increase the irritability of the individual is well known. We might infer therefore, *à priori*, that the greater number of common assaults would be committed by the greatest drunkards. In 1848 there were 7780 individuals assaulted in London, and nearly one-fourth of these, or 1882, were attacked by labouring men, one in every 26 of the entire body of labourers having been charged with this offence. The "simple larceny," of which the labouring classes appear, by the same returns, to be more guilty than any other body of individuals, is also explained by their inordinate intemperance. When a man's bodily energy is destroyed by drink, labour is so irksome to him that he would sooner peril his liberty than work. What wonder, then, that as many as 1 in every 28 labourers should be charged with theft? Whereas, of the rest of the population there are only 1 in every 226 individuals. Thus, of the labouring classes, 1 in every 22 is charged with being drunk; 1 in every 26 with committing an assault; and 1 in every 28 with being guilty of simple larceny.

For the truth of the connexion existing between drink, pugnacity, and theft, I would refer to the statement of one of the most intelligent and experienced of the coal whippers,—one, indeed, to whose unceasing and heroic exertions that class principally owe their redemption:—"The children of the coal-whippers," he told me, "were, under the old system, almost reared in the tap-room." He himself had known as many as 500 youths that were transported; and this, be it remembered, out of a class numbering only 2000 men.

Such, then, are the proved consequences of an inordinate use of intoxicating liquors. It becomes, therefore, the duty of every one who is anxious for the well-being of the people, to diminish the occasions for drinking wherever possible. To permit the continuance of certain systems of employment and payment, which are well known, both to tempt and compel the men to indulge in intoxicating liquors, is at once to breed the very crimes that it is the office of Government to suppress. The custom pursued by the coal-merchants of paying the labourers in their employ in public-houses, as I lately exposed, appeared bad enough. The "backer," jaded and depressed with his excessive work through the day, was entrapped into the public-house in the evening, under the pretence of receiving his wages. Once inside he was kept waiting there hour after hour by the publican (who of course was out of silver, and had to send some distance for it). Beer is called for by the men in the meantime. Under the influence of the stimulant, the fatigue and the depression begin to leave the labourers, the burden that is still on their backs (it will be remembered that such is the description of the men themselves) is shaken off, and their muscles no longer ache and are stiff, but relax, while their flagging spirits gradually revive under the potent charm of the liquor. What wonder, then, that the poor creatures finding it so easy, and when the habit is once formed, so pleasant, a cure for their ills, should be led to follow up one draught with another and another? This system appeared to me to be vicious enough, and to display a callousness on the part of the employers that quite startled me. But the system under which the ballast-labourers are now suffering, is an infamy hardly to be credited as flourishing in these days. I have, therefore, been at considerable pains to establish such a mass of evidence upon the subject as shall make all earnest men look upon the continuance of such a system as a national dishonour.

Meeting of the Ballast-Heavers' Wives.

Before dealing with the Lumpers, or those who discharge the timber from ships — in contradistinction to the stevedores, or those who stow the cargoes of vessels,—I will give

the following report of a meeting of the ballast-heavers' wives. It is the wife and children who are the real sufferers from the intemperance of the working-man; and being anxious to give the public some idea of the amount of misery entailed upon these poor creatures by the compulsory and induced drunkenness of the husbands, I requested as many as could leave their homes to meet me at the British and Foreign School, in Shakespeare-walk, Shadwell. The meeting consisted of the wives of ballast-heavers and coal-whippers. The wives of the coal-whippers had come there to contrast their present state with their past, with a view of showing the misery they had endured when their husbands were under the same thraldom to the publican as the ballast-heavers are now, and the comparative happiness which they have experienced since they were freed from it. They had attended unsolicited, in the hope, by making their statements public, of getting for the ballast-heavers the same freedom from the control of the publican which the coal-whippers had obtained.

The meeting consisted of the wives of ballast-heavers and coal-whippers, thirty-one were present. Of the thirty-one, nine were the wives of coal-whippers, the remaining twenty-two the wives of ballast-heavers. Many others, who had expressed a desire to attend, were prevented by family cares and arrangements; but, small as the meeting was comparatively, it afforded a very fair representation of the circumstances and characters of their husbands. For instance, those who were coal-whippers' wives appeared comfortable and "well to do." They wore warm gowns, had on winter-bonnets and clean tidy caps underneath; the ballast-heavers' wives, on the contrary, were mostly ragged, dejected, and anxious-looking.

An endeavour was made to ascertain in the first instance how many children each person had. This was done by questioning them separately; and from the answers it appeared that they all had families. Eight had one child each, the rest varied from two to eight, and one woman stated that she had twelve children, all of whom were living, but that only four resided now with her and her husband. Five had infants in their arms, and several had children sick, either at home or in some hospital.

In the next place the ballast-heavers' wives were asked whether their husbands worked under publicans? "All of them," was the reply, "work under publicans;" and, said one, "Worse luck for us,"—a sentiment that was very warmly concurred in by all the rest.

This fact having been specifically ascertained from each woman, we proceeded to inquire from them separately how much their husbands earned, and how much of their earnings was spent at the publicans' houses through which they obtained work, or where they were paid.

"My husband," said the first woman, "works under a publican, and I know that he earns now 12*s.* or 13*s.* a-week, but he brings home to me only half-a-crown, and sometimes not so much. He spends all the rest at a public-house where he gets his jobs, and often comes home drunk."

"My husband," exclaimed the second, "will sometimes get from 24*s.* to 28*s.* a-week, but I never see anything the likes o' that money from him. He spends it at the publican's. And when he has earned 24*s.* he will sometimes bring home only 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* We are badly off, you may be sure, when the money goes in this way. But my husband cannot help spending it, for he is obliged to get his jobs at the public-house."

"Last week," interposed another, "we had not one penny coming into our house; and the week before—which was Christmas week—my husband got two jobs which would come, he told me, to 8*s.* or 9*s.* if he had brought it all home; but he only brought me 1*s.* This was all the money I had to keep me and my five children for the whole week; and I'm sure I don't know how we got through. This is all owing to the public-house. And when we go to fetch our husbands at eleven or twelve o'clock at night they shut us out, and say they are not there, though we know very well they are inside in a back place. My husband has been kept in that back place many a time till two or three in the morning—then he has been turned out and come home drunk, without 6*d.* in his pocket, though the same day he has received 8*s.* or 9*s.* at the same public-house."

"They go to the public-house," added another woman, "to get jobs, and to curry favour they spend their money there, because if they did not spend their money they would never get a job. The men who will drink the greatest quantity of money will get the most jobs. This leaves their families and their wives miserable, and I am sure me and my poor family are miserable enough."

"But this," interposed a quiet, elderly woman, "is the beginning of the tenth week, in all of which my husband has only had four jobs, and all I have received of him during that time is 1*s.* 3½*d.* a-week, and we stand in 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week rent. I am sure I don't know how we get along. But our publicans are very civil, for my husband works for two. Still, if he does not drink a good part of it away we know very well he will get no more work."

"It is very little," said a female with an infant in her arms, "that my husband earns; and of what little he does earn he does not fetch much to me. He got one job last week, heaving 45 tons, and he fetched me home 1*s.* 6*d.* for it. I was then in lodgings at 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week, but I could not afford them, but now I'm in lodgings at 9*d.* a-week. This week he has no work yet. In Christmas week my man told me he earned 25*s.*, and I believe he did, but he only fetched me home 8*s.* or 9*s.* on Saturday. My husband works for a publican, and it was at his house he spent his money. One day last week he asked the publican to give him a job, and he said, 'I cannot give you a job, for there is nothing against you on the slate but 1*s.*,' and so he got none there. My infant is six weeks old to-day, and this woman by me (appealing to the female next to her) knows well it is the truth that I tell—that for two nights in last week my child and myself were obliged to go to bed breadless. We had nothing neither of those two days. It was the same in one night the week before Christmas, though my husband received that night 8*s.*, but all was spent at the public-house. On Christmas night we could not get any supper. We had no money, and I took the gown off my back and pawned it for 2*s.* to provide something for us to eat. I have nothing else to say but this—that whatever my husband earns I get little or nothing of it, for it goes to the public-house where he gets his jobs."

An infirm woman, approaching fifty years of age, who spoke in a tone of sorrowful resignation, said,—"We have had very little money coming in of late. My husband has been very bad for ten weeks back. He throws up blood; I suppose he has strained himself too much. All the money I have had for six weeks to keep us both has been 8*s.* If he was earning money he would bring it to me."

Another woman, "Not without the publican's allowance, I am sure."

The first woman, "No; the publican's allowance would be taken off; but the publican, you see, must have a little—I do not know how much it is, but they must have something if they give us their jobs."

This woman was here asked if her husband ever came home drunk?

"Yes," she replied; "many a time he comes home drunk; but he must have the drink to get the jobs."

A number of other women having made statements confirmatory of the above:—

"Do you think," the meeting was asked, "your husbands would be sober as well as industrious men if they could be got away from the public-house system of employment and payment of wages?"

"God Almighty bless you!" exclaimed one woman, "they would love us and their families all the better for it! We should all be much the better for it."

"And so say all of us!" was the next and perfectly unanimous exclamation.

"If we could see that day," said one who had spoken before, "our families would have little to complain of."

Another added, "The night-houses ought to be closed. That would be one good thing."

Some inquiries were then made as to whether these poor women were ill-treated by their husbands when they came home in a state of intoxication. There was a good deal of hesitation before any answers could be obtained. At last one woman said, "her husband did certainly beat her, of course; but then," she added, "he did not know what he was doing."

"I," said another, "should not know what it was to have an angry word with my husband if he was always sober. He is a quiet man—very, when the drink is out of him; but we have many words together when he is tipsy; and ——" she stopped without completing the sentence.

Several others gave similar testimony; and many declared that it was the public-house system which led their husbands to drink.

One woman here said that the foremen of gangs, as well as the publican, helped to reduce the ballast-heaver's earnings; for they gave work to men who took lodgings from them, though they did not occupy them.

This was confirmed by another woman, who spoke with great warmth upon the subject. She said that married men who could not afford to spend with the publican and lodge with the foremen in the manner pointed out, would be sure to have no work. Other men went straight from one job to another, while her own husband and other women's husbands had been three or four weeks without lifting a shovelful of ballast. She considered this was very hard on men who had families.

A question was here asked, whether any women were present whose husbands, in order to obtain work, were obliged to pay for lodgings which they did not use?

One immediately rose and said, "They do it regularly at a publican's in Wapping; and I know the men that have paid for them have had six jobs together, when my husband has had none for weeks." "There are now," added another, "fourteen at that very place who never lodge there, though they are paying for lodgings."

They were next asked, who had suffered from want owing to their husbands drinking their earnings, as described at the public-houses in question?

"Starvation has been my lot," said one. "And mine," added another. "My children," said a third, "have often gone to bed at night without breaking their fast the whole length of the day." "And mine," said one, "have many a time gone without a bit or sup of anything all the day, through their father working for the publican."

"I cannot," exclaimed the next, "afford my children a ha'porth of milk a-day."

"Many a time," said one, who appeared to be very much moved, "have I put my four children to bed, when the only meal they have had the whole day has been 1lb. of bread; but it's of no use opening my mouth."

"I,' said the last, "have been in London twenty-seven years, and during that time I can safely say I have never taken myself a single glass of spirits or anything else; but in that time I have suffered the martyrdom of forty years—all through my husband and the public-house. I have two children who bring me in, one of them 2*s.* 6*d.* and the other 6*s.* 6*d.* a-week, which is all we have, for my husband gets nearly nothing. If he could bring his earnings home, instead of spending them at a public-house, we should be very comfortable."

These questions led to one concerning the late-hour system at the public-houses frequented by the ballast-heavers.

"I often go for my husband," said one, "at one or two o'clock in the morning, after I know he has been paid; but they have kept him in a back apartment away from me, till I have threatened to smash the windows if they did not let him out. I threatened to smash the windows because my children were wanting the money for bread, which he was spending there. If our husbands were inclined to come home sober there is little chance, for they have cards and bagatelle to keep them till they become heady, and when they are become heady, there is nothing left for their families—then the publicans kick our poor men out, and lock the doors."

This statement was confirmed, and after several other persons had described their feelings,—

The coal-whippers' wives were asked whether or not their condition and that of their families had been improved since the system of carrying on the trade had been altered by the Legislature?

The answer was a most decisive affirmative. Their husbands, they said, used to spend all, or very nearly all, their earnings with the publicans; but now, when they got a good ship, they brought home the greatest part of their earnings, which was sufficient to make their families comfortable. Their husbands had become quite different men. They used to ill-treat them when they were paid at a public-house—very much so, because of the drink; but now they were very much altered, because they were become sober men to what they were. None were now distressed to provide for their families, and if there was plenty of work they would be quite happy. The improvement, one woman said, must be very great, otherwise there would not be so many institutions and benefit societies, pension societies, and schools or their children.

This declaration was very warmly applauded by the wives of the ballast-heavers. They declared that similar measures would produce similar benefits in their case, and they hoped the day would soon come when they should be secure in the enjoyment of them.

So terminated the proceedings.

Lumpers.

The "Lumpers" are, if possible, in a more degraded state than the ballast-heavers; they are not, it is true, under the same amount of oppression from the publican, but still they are so besotted with the drink which they are tempted to obtain from the publicans who employ them, as to look upon the man who tricks them out of their earnings rather as a friend than an enemy.

The lumpers make, I am informed, during six months in the year, as much as 24*s.*; and during the other six months they have nothing to do. Of the 24*s.* that they earn in their busy time, 20*s.* it will be seen is spent in the public-house. One master-lumper, who is a publican, employs as many as 100 men. This information I have, not only from the men themselves, but from the managers of the Commercial Docks, where the greater number of the lumpers are engaged. The 100 men in the publican's employ, as will be seen from the evidence of the wives, spend upon an average 1*l.* a-week in the house, taking generally but 4*s.* home to their wives and families: so that no less a sum than 100*l.* a-week is squandered in the publican-contractor's house by the working men in drink. There is not only a pay-night, but two "draw-nights" are appointed in the week, as a means of inveigling the men to their master's tap-room; and indeed the same system, which gives the greatest drunkard the best chance of work, prevails among the lumpers as among the ballast-heavers. The effect of this is, that the lumpers are the most drunken, debased, and poverty-stricken of all the classes of labouring men that I have yet seen; for, earning more than the ballast-heavers, they of course have more to spend in the public-house.

I made it a point of looking more minutely into the state of these men on the Sunday, for I have found that on that day it is easy to tell the habits of men by their external appearance. The greater part that I saw were either intoxicated, or else reeking of liquor as early as eleven o'clock on the Sunday morning. One foreman was decently dressed, it was true; but then he was sent to me, I was credibly informed, by the master-publican, who had heard of my previous investigations, to give me a false impression as to the state of the labourers; the rest of the men that I saw were unwashed and unshaven, even up to five and six in the afternoon of that day. Their clothes were the same tattered and greasy garments that I had seen them in the day before; indeed the wives of the lumpers appeared to be alone alive to the degradation of their husbands. At one house that I visited late on the Sunday evening, I found two of the children in one corner of the small close room on the bare boards, covered with a piece

of old carpet, and four more boys and girls stowed away at the top and bottom of the one bed in which the rest of the family slept. Dirty wet clothes were hanging to dry on lines across the room; and the face of the wife, who was alone, in all her squalid misery, was black and gashed with cuts and bruises. Not a step I took but I was dogged by some foreman or other, in the hopes of putting me on the wrong scent. I had arranged with the men on Saturday morning to have a meeting with them on that night after their labour, but on going to the appointed place I found not one labouring man there; and I learnt the next day that the publican had purposely deferred paying them till a late hour, so that they might have no chance of meeting me. On Monday morning, while at the office of the Superintendent of the Commercial Dock Company, one of the lumpers staggered drunk into the room, intent upon making some insolent demand or other. That this drunkenness, with all its attendant vices, is not the fault of the lumpers, but the necessary consequence of the system under which they are employed, no man who has seen the marked difference between the coal-whippers and that class of labourers who still work out of the public-house, can for a moment doubt. The sins of the labouring man, so far as I have seen, are, in this instance, most indisputably the sins of his employer. If he is drunken, it is his master who makes him so: if he is poor, his house bare, his wife ragged, his children half-clothed, half-fed, and wholly uneducated, it is mainly because his master tricks him out of his earnings at the public-house.

Let me now give a description of the lumpers' labour, and then of their earnings. The timber-trade is divided by the custom of the trade into two classes, called timber and deals. By "timber" is meant what is brought in uncut logs; this is American red pine, yellow pine, elm, ash, oak, and birch. The teak-trade is more recent, and seems to be an exception to the classification I have mentioned: it is generally described as teak; mahogany and dye-woods again are not styled timber. The deals are all sawn ready for the carpenter or joiner's use. At the Custom-house the distinctions are, hewn and sawn woods; that is, timber and deals. On timber there is now a duty of 1*s.* per load (a load being fifty cubic feet) and on deals of 2*s.* The deals are sawn in Canada, where immense steam-mills have been erected for the purpose. The advantage to the trader in having this process effected in Canada rather than in this country, seems to be this: the deals brought over prepared, as I have described, of different lengths, varying from six feet to twenty, while three inches is a usual thickness, are ready for the workman's purpose, and no refuse-matter forms a part of them. Were the pine brought in logs, the bark and the unevenness of the tree would add to the freight for what was only valueless. Timber and deals require about the same time for their discharge. The largest vessels that enter into this trade in the port of London are to be found in the West India South Dock, formerly the City Canal. On one occasion in this dock a vessel of 800 tons, containing 24,000 deals and ends, was discharged in twenty-six working hours—forty-five men being employed. I am informed that twenty men would discharge a ship of 600 tons of timber and deals in seven days. Forty men will do it in four days. In order to become acquainted with the system of lumping, I went on board a vessel in the river where a gang of twenty men were at work. She was a vessel of 600 tons, from Quebec. She lay alongside the Flora, a Norwegian vessel—the first timber-ship that had reached the port of London since the change in the Navigation Laws had come into operation. The Flora's cargo was 900 pieces of timber, which would be discharged by her crew, as the lumpers are only employed in British vessels. The vessel that I visited, and which lay next the Flora, had her hold and the between-decks (which might be thirty-eight yards in length) packed closely with deals. She held between 17,000 and 18,000 deals. She was being lightened in the river before going into dock; twenty men were at work in two barges, well moored alongside, close to two portholes in the stern of the ship. There were three men in each barge who received and packed the deals into the barge as they were thrust out of the portholes; the larger deals were carried along by two men as soon as a sufficient clearance had been made to enable them to run along—at first, bent half-double. The two men who carried the deals ran along in a sort of jog-trot motion, keeping time, so that the motion relieved the pressure of the weight; the men all said it was easier to run than to walk with the deals: the shorter deals (ends) were carried, one by each man, who trotted on in the same measured steps,—each man, or each two men employed, delivering his or their deal to one especial man in the barge, so that a constant communication from the ship to the barge was kept up, and the work went on without hitch or stoppage. This same vessel, on a former occasion, was discharged in thirty-six hours, which shows (as there were between 17,000 and 18,000 carryings and deliverings of the deals) how rapidly the work is conducted. The timber is all dragged from the holds or the between-decks of the ship by machines; the lumpers house it from its place in the ship by means of winches, tackles, and dogs—which latter are iron links to lay hold of the logs. Three of these winches and tackles are stationed at equal distances on each side of a large ship, and thus with the aid of crowbars the several pieces of timber are dragged along the hold and then dropped gently into the water, either in the dock or in the river, and floated in rafts to its destination. All "timber"

is floated, as a rule. Sometimes when the ship is discharged in dock, timber or deals are let down a slide on to a platform, and so carried to the pile or the waggon. Contractors are employed by the ship-owners in the West India Docks, as they will do some ships cheaper by 10*l.* than the company could afford to do it. The ship-owners bear the expense of discharging the ship.

The following evidence of a lumper was given unwillingly, indeed it was only by a series of cross-questionings that any approximation to the truth could be extracted from him. He was evidently in fear of losing his work; and the tavern to which I had gone to take his statement was filled with foremen watching and intimidating him. He said:

"I am a working lumper, or labourer at discharging timber or deal-ships. I have been sixteen years at the work. I should think that there are more than two hundred men at Deptford who are constantly engaged at the work: there are a great many more working lumpers living at Limehouse, Poplar, and Blackwall. These do the work principally of the West India Docks; and when the work is slack there and brisk at the Commercial, East Country, or Grand Surrey Canal Docks, the men cross the water and get a job on the Surrey side of the river. In the summer a great many Irish labourers seek for work as lumpers. They come over from Ireland in the Cork boats. I should say there are altogether upwards of 500 regular working lumpers; but in the summer there are at least 200 more, owing to the number of Irish who come to England to look for work at that time of the year. The wages of the regular lumpers are not less when the Irish come over in the summer, nor do the men get a less quantity of work to do. There are more timber and deal-ships arriving at that season, so more hands are required to discharge them. The ships begin to arrive in July, and they continue coming in till January. After that time they lay up till March, when they sail for the foreign ports. Between January and July the regular working lumpers have little or nothing to do. During that time there are scarcely any timber or deal ships coming in; and the working lumpers then try to fall in with anything they can, either ballasting a ship, or carrying a few deals to load a timber-carriage, or doing a little 'tide work.' Between July and January the work is very brisk. We are generally employed every day for those six months. Sometimes we lose a day after lightening a ship in the river, while the vessel is going into dock. We call it lightening a ship when she is laden too heavy, and draws too much water to enter the docks. In such a case we generally begin discharging the timber or deals in the river, either off Deptford or Blackwall, according as the ship may be for the docks on the Middlesex or Surrey side. In the river we discharge the deals into lighters, whereas when the ship is in the dock we generally discharge along a stage on to the shore. Timber we put overboard in both cases, and leave it for the raftsmen to put together into rafts, and float into the timber-ponds of the different docks. The deals we merely land. It is our duty to put them ashore and nothing more. After that the deal-porters take them and sort them, and pile them. They sort the white from the yellow deals, and each kind into different lengths, and then arrange them in piles all along the dock.

"Our usual time of working is from six to six in the summer time and from daylight to dark in the winter. We always work under a foreman. There are two foremen lumpers to almost every ship that we discharge; and they engage the men, who work in gangs under them. Each gang consists of from 4 to 12 men, according as the size of the ship is large, or she is wanted to be discharged quickly. I have known as many as 30 lumpers engaged on one ship; she was 1000 tons, and wanted to be got out quick, so that she might make another voyage before the winter set in abroad.

"The foreman and men are employed by the master-lumper. Some of the master-lumpers are publicans; some others keep chandlers' shops, and others do nothing else that I know of. The master pays the working men 3*s.* 6*d.* a-day, and the foreman 1*s.* extra. We are settled with every Saturday night. We have two draw-nights in each week; that is, the master advances either a part or the whole of our earnings, if we please, on Tuesday and Thursday nights. I work under a publican. My master has only gone into the public line very lately. I don't think he's been at it more than eighteen months. He has been a master-lumper I should say for these 10 or 12 years past. I worked under him before he had a public-house. Then he paid every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights, at the same house he is now proprietor of. The master-lumper always pays the men he employs at the public-house, whether they are publicans or not.

"My master employs, I should say, in the spring season, from 80 to 100 hands regularly: and most of these meet at his house on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and all of them on Saturday night, either to be settled with in full or have a part of their wages advanced. We are usually paid at 7 o'clock in the evening. I have been paid as late as 3 o'clock on Sunday morning; but that was some years ago, and I was all that time in the public-house. We go straight to the public-house after we have done our work.

"At this time of the year we knock off work at dark, that is, at five [I am informed at the Commercial Docks that the usual hour is four] o'clock, and we remain at our master's until pay-time, that is 7 o'clock. This we do for three nights a-week certain; and after our work at other nights we mostly meet at our master's public-house. The men generally draw from 2*s.* to 4*s.*, and on a Thursday night the same sum is advanced to them. The men are not enforced to spend anything in the house. Each man has a little beer while the master is getting ready to pay him on the draw-nights; and he generally remains in the house after he has received his money some time, as he thinks proper. On a draw-night in the brisk season many out of the hundred he employs will stop drinking till 10 o'clock. Some go away immediately after they have drawn their money. At least half stop for some time, that is, till 10 o'clock. Some sit there and spend all they draw. All the beer that the lumpers have on board ship is supplied by the master. He supplies any quantity that is wanted. The reason why he keeps the public-house is to have the right of supplying the men with beer. He wouldn't, of course, like to see us take beer from any other house than his; if we did he would give us the sack. Every master-lumper works out of a public-house, and the men must have their beer from the house that he works out of; and if they don't, why they ain't wanted. We generally take about two pots per man a-day from the house when we go to our work in the morning. On a Saturday night we mostly stop longer than on the draw-nights. Upon an average, the working lumpers I should say spend about 2*s.* a-day in the season in the public-house. [It will have been seen, that the lumpers' wives whom I saw declare that the men spend 20*s.* out of every 24*s.*] After a hard week's work I think they have generally 8*s.* or 9*s.* out of the 1*l.* 4*s.* that they earn at the busiest time of the year. I myself have taken home as little as 5*s.* [According to this statement, assuming that there are 100 hands—many say that there are more—regularly employed out of this public-house in the spring season, and spending each upon an average from 12*s.* to 20*s.*, or say 16*s.* a-week, as much as 80*l.* a-week is squandered in beer.] I should say, taking all the year round, the men make 10*s.* 6*d.* a-week. For at least four months in the year there is no work at all; and for two months more it is very slack. I am a married man with one child: when I am in full work I take home 5*s.* a-week at the least. My wife and child has to suffer for it all."

Let me now cite the following table, which I have been at considerable trouble in obtaining, as the only means of arriving at a correct estimate as to the collective earnings of the "journeymen lumpers," or men generally engaged in discharging the cargoes of the British timber and deal ships. The information has in the three principal instances been derived directly from the books of the Dock Companies, through the courtesy and consideration of the superintendents and directors, to whom I am greatly indebted.

NUMBER OF SHIPS WOOD-LADEN DISCHARGED AT THE DIFFERENT DOCKS IN 1849.

	By the Dock Company.		By Lumpers.		By Crews.		Total.	
	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.
West India Docks . .	36	22,556	69	24,347	24	6,796	129	53,699
Commercial Docks . .	2	1,186	154	63,213	259	75,096	415	139,495
Grand Surrey Canal . .	..	..	153	45,900	59	17,000	212	62,900
East Country Docks . .	..	..	11	3,400	64	19,091	75	22,500
Regent's Canal . . .	..	..	2	600	..	..	2	600
	38	23,742	389	137,469	406	117,983	833	279,194

By the above returns it will be seen, that in the course of that year 389 timber and deal ships, of 137,469 tons burthen collectively, were discharged by lumpers. This at 9*d.* per ton, which is the price usually given by the Dock Companies, would give 5,155*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.* as the gross amount paid to the contractors. The master-lumper derives little or no profit out of this sum directly. This will be evident from the subjoined statement. A gentleman at the West India Docks, who has been all his life connected with the timber trade, informs us that twenty men will discharge a wood-laden ship in seven days. Now,—

20 men at 3*s.* 6*d.* per day for seven days, comes to . .	£24	10	0
And 600 tons at 9*d.* per ton, to	22	10	0
So that the master-lumper, by this account, would lose by the job at the very least .	£2	0	0

This statement is fully borne out by the fact that the master-lumpers will often agree to discharge a ship for 10*l.* less than the company could possibly afford to do it for with their own men. The question then arises, How is it that the master-lumper is enabled to do this

and live? This is easily answered. He is generally either a publican himself or connected with one, and the journeymen in his employ spend at his public-house, according to the account of the wives, five-sixths of their wages in drink, or *1l.* out of every *24s.* they earn. Say, however, that only four-fifths of the gross earnings are thus consumed, then four thousand and odd out of the *5,155l.* will go to the publican, and one thousand and odd pounds to the men.

TIMBER-DOCK LABOURERS.

HAVING already given an account of the supply and consumption of timber throughout the country generally, I shall now speak of the importations into London, and more especially of the condition of the labourers connected with the foreign and colonial timber trade.

The quantity of colonial and foreign timber that has been brought into the port of London since the year 1843 has been as follows:—

	1844.	1845.	1846.	1847.	1848.	1849.
Colonial deals and battens (in pieces)	2,025,000	2,349,000	2,355,000	3,339,000	2,740,000	2,722,000
Foreign ditto (in ditto)	2,130,000	2,290,000	1,242,000	1,996,000	2,044,000	1,903,000
Total pieces	4,155,000	4,639,000	3,597,000	5,335,000	4,784,000	4,625,000
Colonial timber (in loads)	57,200	55,800	53,600	49,600	38,300	38,600
Foreign ditto (in do.)	58,200	68,100	86,000	79,100	69,000	61,400
Total loads	115,400	123,900	139,600	128,700	107,300	100,000

The consumption of the metropolis has been little less than the quantity imported. In the six years above enumerated the total importation of foreign and colonial deals and battens was 27,135,000 pieces, of which 26,695,573 were consumed in London; and the total importation of foreign and colonial timber was 714,000 loads, of which 644,224 were consumed. This gives an average annual importation of 4,522,500 deals and battens, of which only 73,238 have been sent out of the country every year. Of timber, the average annual importation is 119,150 loads, and the average annual exportation only 11,779 loads.

The number of wood-laden ships that have entered the port of London since 1840, together with the countries whence they came, is given below. By this we shall perceive that our trade with Norway in this respect has sunk to exactly one-half of what it was ten years back, while that with Sweden and Finland has been very nearly doubled in the same time. The timber-ships from the Prussian ports have increased little less than one-third, while those from Russia have decreased in the same proportion. The trade with Quebec and Montreal also appears to be much greater than it was in 1840, though compared with 1841 there has been a considerable falling off; that of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia remains very nearly the same as it was at the beginning of the decennial period. Altogether the great change appears to have been the decline of the Norwegian and Russian timber-trade, and the increase of that with Sweden and Prussia. It is also worthy of notice, that notwithstanding the increase of population, the number of wood-laden ships entering the port of London every year has not materially increased within the last ten years.

THE NUMBER OF CARGOES OF TIMBER, DEALS, AND BATTENS, IMPORTED INTO LONDON IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS.

	1840.	1841.	1842.	1843.	1844.	1845.	1846.	1847.	1848.	1849.
Christiana and Christiansund	49	50	47	27	36	27	22	32	39	23
Other ports of Norway	52	43	38	36	49	39	17	28	25	27
Gothenburg	61	64	49	59	59	66	30	67	55	41
Swedish ports and Finland	85	84	85	102	90	149	103	101	138	154
Russian ports	181	108	130	119	163	115	146	91	113	134
Prussian ports	70	70	52	104	143	124	109	167	108	100
Quebec and Montreal	168	224	188	230	206	206	166	216	179	195
New Brunswick and Nova Scotia	104	97	62	134	90	102	127	145	108	105
Sierra Leone, Maulmein, &c.	16	20	29	31	5	10	20	21	13	20
	786	760	681	842	841	838	740	868	778	799

The next step in our inquiry is, What becomes of the 800 wood-laden ships that annually enter the port of London? Whither do they go to be unladen? to what docks, or places of "special security," are they consigned to be discharged and to have their cargoes delivered or bonded?

For this purpose there are five docks, three of which lie on the Surrey side of the river. These three are the Commercial Docks, the Grand Surrey Canal Dock, and the East Country Dock, and they are almost contiguous to each other, the Surrey Canal Dock lying immediately alongside the Commercial, and the East Country at the upper end of it. They are situated in, and indeed occupy, nearly the whole of that small cape of land which is formed by the bending of the river between the Pool and Limehouse Reach. The docks on the Middlesex side of the river, which are used for the reception and unlading of timber-ships, are the West India and the Regent's Dock, or the entrance to the Regent's Canal.

The number of wood-laden ships that have entered the three principal docks for the last ten years is given below. I am informed by Mr. Jones of the Commercial Docks, that for every ship above 100 tons six men are required to sort and pile away. Rafting from ships of the above burden requires one or two men daily, according to circumstances.

THE NUMBER OF WOOD-LADEN SHIPS WHICH ENTERED THE DIFFERENT DOCKS UNDERMENTIONED IN THE FOLLOWING YEARS.

Year.	West India Docks.		Commercial Docks.		Grand Surrey Docks.	
	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.	Vessels.	Tons.
1840	155	62,024	211	65,809	135	40,447
1841	201	82,196	265	70,438	114	34,594
1842	136	54,931	250	87,124	100	29,596
1843	169	71,211	368	121,846	108	31,299
1844	121	53,581	480	142,223	173	48,896
1845	149	70,514	424	137,047	155	43,211
1846	182	88,308	351	111,189	195	50,908
1847	228	124,114	423	143,966	226	62,433
1848	138	76,650	412	132,406	195	53,423
1849	138	67,860	410	136,329	212	58,780
Total	1,617	751,389	3,544	1,148,377	1,613	453,587
Average Number of Ships per Year, and their Average Tonnage	161	4464	354	324	161	281

The foreign and colonial timber trade is, then, confined to five of the seven docks belonging to the port of London. Of these five, three—the Commercial, the Grand Surrey Canal, and the East Country—are situate on the Surrey side of the river, occupying altogether an area of 172½ acres, of which 100½ are water and 72 land, and offering accommodation and protection for no less than 678 vessels. Here the principal part of the timber and deal trade is carried on, the Commercial receiving the greatest number of wood-laden vessels, perhaps greater than any other dock in the world. These, together with that portion of the West India Dock which is devoted to the same purpose, make the entire extent of the timber docks attached to the port of London about 250 acres, of which upwards of 140 are water—a space sufficient to give berths to no less than 940 ships.

I now come to speak of the condition and earnings of the labourers connected with the timber and hard-wood trade. Of these, it appears there are 1030 men casually employed at all the timber docks, of whom only 132 obtain work all the year round. How the 900 casual deal-porters and rafters live during the six months of the year that the slack season usually lasts in the timber trade, I cannot conceive. As not a sixpence of their earnings is saved in the brisk season, their fate in the winter is to suffer privations and afflictions which they only know.

I shall begin with the state of the dock-labourers employed at the foreign and hard-wood trade. This trade is confined mainly, if not solely, to the West India Dock.

Concerning this branch of the wood trade, I give below the statement of a man who has worked at it for many years, and in doing so, I wish to draw attention to the latter part of the narrative, as a proof of what I have repeatedly asserted respecting the regard exhibited by the authorities of the West India

Dock, and in particular by Mr. Knight, the superintendent, for the welfare of all the men, whether directly or even indirectly employed by them.

This indirect employment of workmen, however, is the great bane of the industrious classes. Whether the middleman goes by the name of sweater, chamber-master, lumper, or contractor, it is this trading operative who is the great means of reducing the wages of his fellow working-men. To make a profit out of the employment of his brother-operatives he must obtain a lower-class labour. He cares nothing about the quality of the work, so long as the workmen can get through it somehow, and will labour at a cheaper rate. Hence it becomes a business with him to hunt out the lowest grades of working men—the drunken, the dishonest, the idle, the vagabond, and the unskilful men—because these, being unable to obtain employment at the regular wages of the sober, honest, industrious, and skilful portion of the trade, he can obtain their labour at a lower rate than what is usually paid. "Boy-labour or thief-labour," said a middleman on a large scale, "what do I care, so long as I can get my work done cheap." I have already shown that the wives of the sweaters not only parade the streets of London on the look-out for youths raw from the country, but that they make periodical trips to the poorest provinces of Ireland, in order to obtain workmen at the lowest possible rate. I have shown, moreover, that foreigners are annually imported from the Continent for the same purpose, and that among the chamber-masters in the shoe trade, the child-market at Bethnal-green, as well as the workhouses, are continually ransacked for the means of obtaining a cheaper kind of labour. All my investigations go to prove that it is chiefly by means of the middleman-system that the wages of the working men are reduced. This contractor—this trading operative—uses the most degraded of the class as a means of underselling the worthy and skilful labourers, and of ultimately dragging the better down to the abasement of the worst. If men cannot subsist on lower prices, then he takes apprentices or hires children; or if workmen of character and worth refuse to work at less than the ordinary rate, then he seeks out the moral refuse of the trade, those whom none else will employ; or else he flies to the workhouse and the gaol to find labour meet for his purpose. Backed by this cheap and refuse labour, he offers his work at lower prices, and so keeps on reducing and reducing the wages of his brethren until all sink in poverty, wretchedness, and vice. I am therefore the more anxious to impress upon the minds of those gentlemen who are actuated by a sincere regard for the interests and comforts of the men in their employ, the evils of such a system; for, however great may be the saving of trouble effected by it, yet, unless it be strictly watched (as I must confess it is at the West India and Commercial Docks) it can only be maintained by the employment of a cheaper and worse class labourer, and therefore must result in the degradation of the workmen. I have said thus much, because I find this contract system the general practice at all the wood-docks, and because I am convinced that the gentlemen to whom the management of those docks is entrusted, Mr. Knight, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Cannan, have the welfare of the men in their employ sincerely at heart.

Of the evils of lumping, or discharging wood-ships by contract, I have already treated at considerable length. Under that system, it will be remembered, I showed that the contractor, who is commonly a publican, makes his profit, not by cheapening the labourer, but by intoxicating him. Like the contractor for ballast, he gets his money out of the drunkenness of the workmen, and by this means is enabled to undersell the dock proprietors; or, in other words, to discharge the wood-laden ships at a less rate than they could possibly afford to do it for by the fair and honourable employment of their men. Of the effects of this system—the drunkenness of the men, the starvation of the wives, the squalor and ignorance of the children, the wretchedness and desolation of the homes, I have already treated at some length: and it will be seen hereafter that in those docks where the supervision that is maintained at the West India and Commercial is not kept up, the labourers are reduced to almost the same state of poverty and destitution.

But to return. A man living in a small room in a poor neighbourhood, but in a tidy apartment, and with a well-kept little garden at the back, gave me the following account of his earnings and labour in the mahogany department of the West India Docks:—

"I have worked in the West India Docks for eleven years, and for the last half of that time in the mahogany part of the wood-yard. Before that, I was eleven years in the merchant service as able seaman; but I got married, and thought I could do better in the docks; for, after all, what is 18*l.* a-year, supposing I had the luck to be at sea nine months every year at 2*l.* a-month—what is 18*l.* a-year, sir, to keep a wife and family on, as well as a man himself when he's ashore? At the West India Docks, we unload the mahogany, or logwood, or fancy wood from the ships, and pile them wherever they're ordered. We work in gangs of six or seven, with a master at the head of the gang; the logs are got out of the hold with a purchase and a jigger, and heaved ashore by a crane on to a truck, and we drag the truck to the place to stow the timber. In the wood-yards a machine lifts the timber up, by us men turning handles to work the machine, and puts it into its place in the warehouse. We are paid 2*s.* 6*d.* a-day, working from eight to four. If only employed for four hours—and we're not set to work for less than four hours—we have 1*s.* 4*d.* If I could get 2*s.* 6*d.* a-day all the year through, I'd be a happy man; but I can't. Me, and such as me, earns 10*s.*, 11*s.*, or as far as 15*s.* a-week when we are wanted. But take the year through, I make between 9*s.* and 10*s.* a-week; out of that I have to keep a wife and four children. I've lost one child, and my wife can get little or nothing most times to do with her needle; and if she does get work, what can she make at five farthings or three-halfpence a shirt for the slop-shops? My eldest child, however, does make 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week. I live on bread and butter, with a drop of beer now and then, six days out of the seven. On Sundays we mostly have a shilling's worth of meat—bullock's head generally. Sometimes our work is very hard, with heavy lifting. A weakly man's no use, and I've wondered how I have the strength I have on bread and butter. We are all paid in the dock, and there's nobody allowed to get the men to drink, or to traffic with them anyhow, but in a fair, regular way. There's plenty hang about every day who would work a day's work for 2*s.*: there's a good many Irish. I don't know that there's any foreigners, without it be on the sugar side. Sometimes a hundred men are employed in our part of the business; to-day there was from forty to fifty at work, and a hundred more was to be had if they'd been wanted. Jobs often come in in a lump—all at once, or none at all; very often with the wind. We run backwards and forwards to the sugar-side or the Surrey Dock, as we expect to be wanted. We don't know what the foremen of the gangs get, but the company won't allow them to underpay us; and I have nothing to complain about, either of them or the company, though we're bad off. The foreman can pick his men. Many of us has to go to the parish. Once I earned only 3*s.* in three weeks. Our best time is from June or July, continuing on for two, three, four, or five months, as happens. We live half the year and starve the t'other. There's very few teetotalers among us—men want beer if they live upon bread and butter; there's many I know lives on a meal a-day, and that's bread and butter. There's no drunkards among our men. We're mostly married men with families; most poor men is married, I think. Poor as I am, a wife and family's something to cling to like."

The Timber and Deal Trade.

I now come to the timber and deal trade. The labourers connected with this portion of the trade are rafters or raftsmen, and deal or stave-porters; these are either permanently or casually employed. I shall give an account of each, as well as of the system pursued at each of the docks, beginning with the Commercial, because it does the most extensive business in this branch of the wood-trade; and here let me acknowledge the obligations I am under to Mr. Jones, the intelligent and courteous superintendent, for much valuable information.

The working lumpers, as I before explained, are the labourers employed to discharge all wood-laden vessels, except foreign ships, which are discharged by their own crews; the vessels unladen by the lumpers are discharged sometimes in the dock, and sometimes (when too heavily laden) in the river. The cargoes of wood-laden vessels are termed either landed or rafted goods; the "landed" goods are deals, battens, sleepers, wainscot logs, and indeed all but hewn timber, which is "rafted." When a vessel is unladen in the river, the landed goods are discharged by lumpers, who also load the lighters, whereas in dock the lumpers discharge them into the company's barges, which are loaded by them as well. With smaller vessels, however, which occasionally go alongside, the lumpers discharge directly to the shore, where the goods are received by the company's porters. The lumpers never work on shore. Of the porters working on shore there are two kinds, viz. deal and stave-porters, whose duty it is to receive the landed goods and to pile and sort them, either along the quay or in the building ground, if duty has to be paid upon them.

The hewn-timber, or rafted goods, the lumpers thrust through the porthole into the water, and there the raftsman receives them, puts them into lengths and sizes, and then arranges them in floats—there being eighteen pieces to a float. If the ship is discharged in the river, the rafter floats the timber to the docks, and then to the ponds of the company. If, however, the ship is discharged in dock, then the raftman floats the timber only from the main dock to the ponds.

The rafters are all freemen, for otherwise they could not work on the river; they must have served seven years to a waterman, and they are obliged to pay 3*s.* a-year to the Waterman's Company for a license. There are sixteen or seventeen rafters (all preferable men) employed by the Commercial Dock Company, and in busy times there are occasionally as many as forty casual rafters, or "pokers," as they are called, from their poking about the docks for a job: these casual men are not capable of rafting a ship, nor are they free watermen, they are only employed to float the timber from the ship up to the ponds and stow it, or to attend to deliveries. The skill of the rafter lies in gauging and sorting the timber according to size, quality, and ownership, and making it up into floats. It is only an experienced rafter who can tell the different sizes, qualities, and owners of the timber; this the pokers, or casual rafters, are unable to do. The pokers, again, cannot float the timber from the river to the ponds; this is owing to two reasons: first, they are not allowed to do so on account of not being free watermen; and, secondly, they are unable to do so from

the difficulty of navigation. The pokers work exclusively in the docks; neither the rafters nor pokers work under contractors, but the deal and stave-porters invariably do.

The following statement of a rafter at the Commercial Dock I had from a prudent, well-behaved, sober man. He was in company with another man, employed in the same capacity at the same docks, and they both belonged to the better class of labouring men:—

"I am a rafter at the Commercial Dock. I have been working at that dock for the last six years, in the same capacity, and before that I was rafter at the Surrey Dock for between five and six years. I served my apprenticeship to a waterman. I was bound when I was sixteen. We are not allowed to work till we have served two years. In my apprenticeship I was continually engaged in timber-towing, lightering, and at times sculling; but that I did only when the other business was slack. After my time was out I went lightering; and about a dozen years after that I took to rafting. I had been a rafter at the Surrey Canal before then—while I was in my apprenticeship indeed. I had 18*s.* a-week when I first commenced rafting at the Surrey Canal; but that, of course, all went to my master. I was with the Surrey Canal about two years as rafter, and then I joined another party at 30*s.* a-week in the same capacity; this party rented a wharf of the Surrey Canal Company, and I still worked in the dock. There I worked longer time—four hours longer; the wages would have been as good at the Surrey Canal at outside work as they were with the second party I joined. The next place that I went to as rafter was the Commercial Dock, where I am now, and have been for the last six years. I am paid by the week. When I work at the dock I have 1*l.* 1*s.* a-week, and when I am rafting short-hour ships (*i.e.* ships from which we work only from eight till four) I get 4*s.* per day. When I am working long-hour ships (*i.e.* ships at which the working lasts from six till six) I get 5*s.* a-day; the other rafters employed by the company are paid the same. Our wages have remained the same ever since I have been in the business; all the other men have been lowered, such as carpenters, labourers, watchmen, deal-porters and the like; but we are not constant men, or else I dare say ours would have been reduced too. They have lowered the wages of the old hands, who have been there for years, 1*s.* a-week. Formerly they had 1*l.* 1*s.*, now they get 1*l.*; the men are dissatisfied. The wages of the casual dock-labourers have been reduced a great deal more than those of the constant men; three months ago they all had 18*s.* a-week, and now the highest wages paid to the casual labourers is 15*s.* The reason why the wages of the rafters have not been lowered is, I take it, because we are freemen, and there are not so many to be had who could supply our places. Not one of a hundred lightermen and watermen are able to raft. We are only employed at certain times of the year. Our busy time begins at July, and ends in October. We are fully employed about four months in the year, and get during that time from 1*l.* 1*s.* to 30*s.* a-week, or say 25*s.* upon an average. The rest of our time we fills up as we can. Some of the rafters has boats, and they look out for a job at sculling; but that's poor enough now."

"Ah, very poor work, indeed," said an old weather-beaten man who was present, and had had 40 years' experience at the business. "When I first joined it, it was in the war time," he added, "and then I was scarcely a day idle, and now I can't get work for better than half my time."

"For the other eight months," continued the other man, "I should think the rafters upon an average make 5*s.* a-week. Some of them has boats, and some gets a job at timber-towing; but some (and that's the greatest number) has nothing at all to turn their hands to excepting the casual dock labour; that is, anything they can chance to get hold of. I don't think those who depend upon the casual labour of the docks after the fall season is over (the fall ships are the last that come) make 5*s.* a-week, take one man with another. I should say, more likely, their weekly earnings is about 4*s.* There are about 16 rafters at the Commercial Docks, and only one single man among the number. They none of them save any money during the busy season. They are in debt when the brisk time comes, and it takes them all the summer to get clear; which perhaps they does by the time the fall ships have done, and then, of course, they begin going on in the old strain again. A rafter's life is merely getting into debt and getting clear of it,—that is it—and that is a great part of the life of all the labourers along shore."

He then produced the following account of his earnings for the last year:—

1st week	£1	1	0
2d „	1	8	0*
3d „	1	4	0
4th „	1	5	6
5th „	0	0	0
6th „	1	1	0
7th „	0	0	0
8th „	1	1	0
9th „	0	0	0
10th „	1	1	0
11th „	0	4	0†
12th „	1	1	0
13th „	0	4	0†
14th „	0	7	6
15th „	0	0	0
16th „	0	0	0
17th „	1	1	0
18th „	0	10	0†
19th „	1	4	0
20th „	0	17	6†

* Outside work. † Jobbing.

21st week	£0	13	0
22d „	0	7	0
23d „	1	1	0
24th „	0	10	0†
25th „	0	2	6
26th „	0	4	0
27th „	0	1	0
28th „	1	1	0‡
29th „	1	4	0
30th „	1	3	0
31st „	1	1	0
32d „	1	6	0
33d „	1	3	0
34th „	1	1	0
35th „	0	14	0
36th „	1	7	0
37th „	2	0	0
38th „	1	5	0§
39th „	1	0	6
40th „	1	4	0
41st „	1	10	0
42d „	1	4	0
43d „	1	10	0
44th „	1	14	0
45th „	1	5	6
46th „	1	10	4
47th „	0	5	0
48th „	1	10	0
49th „	1	10	0
50th „	1	10	0
51st „	1	7	0
52d „	1	1	0

1850.

1st week	£1	10	0
2d „	0	10	6
3d „	1	1	0
4th „	0	12	6
5th „	2	10	6‖
6th „	1	1	0
7th „	1	7	0
8th „	1	8	0
9th „	0	19	0
10th „	1	1	0¶
11th „	0	3	0†
12th „	0	18	0¶
13th „	0	10	0†
14th „	0	0	0
15th „	1	0	0
16th „	0	12	0
17th „	1	1	0
18th „	1	5	0¶
19th „	1	0	0
20th „	0	0	0

This gives an average for the seventy-two weeks above cited of 18*s.* 6¼*d.* per week.

"Where I get 1*l.*" the man continued, after I had copied his accounts, "many don't get 5*s.* I know many friends on the river, and I get a number of odd jobs which others can't. In the last six years my earnings have been much about the same; but others, I am sure, don't make half what I do—I have earned 1*l.* 8*s.* when I know they have been walking about and not earned a penny. In busy times, as many as forty pokers are employed; sometimes for as many as five weeks in the year. They get 3*s.* 6*d.* a-day from six to six. After they are out of work they do as best they can. It's impossible to tell how one-half of them live. Half their time they are starving. The wives of the rafters go some of them charing; some are glove-makers, and others dressmakers. None that I know of do slopwork."

† Jobbing. ‡ Busy time begins.
§ Working Sunday and nights.
‖ Contract job on river. ¶ Dock work.

I now come to the deal and stave-porters. First, as to those employed at the Commercial Docks.

From a man who has an excellent character given to him by his employers I had the following account:—

"At our dock," he said, "timber and corn are the principal articles; but they are distinct branches and have distinct labourers. I am in the deal part; when a foreign timber-ship comes to the dock, the timber is heaved out of the porthole by the crew themselves. The deal ships, too, are sometimes unloaded by the foreigners themselves, but not often; three or four out of a dozen may. Ours is very dangerous work: we pile the deals sometimes ninety deals high—higher at the busiest time, and we walk along planks, with no hold, carrying the deals in our hands, and only our firm tread and our eye to depend upon. We work in foggy weather, and never stop for a fog; at least, we haven't for eight or nine years, to my knowledge. In that sort of weather accidents are frequent. There was last year, I believe, about thirty-five falls, but no deaths. If it's a bad accident, the deal-porters give 6*d.* a-piece on Saturday night, to help the man that's had it. There's no fund for sickness. We work in gangs of five usually, sometimes more. We are paid for carrying 100 of 12-feet deals, 1*s.* 9*d.*; 14 feet, 2*s.* 2*d.*; 20 and 21 feet, 3*s.*; 22 feet, 3*s.* 8*d.*; and from 24 to 27 feet, 4*s.* 3*d.* That's at piece-work. We used to have 3*d.* per 100 more for every sort, but it was reduced three or four months back,—or more, may be. In a general way we are paid nothing extra for having to carry the deals beyond an average distance, except for what we call long runs: that's as far, or about as far, as the dock extends from the place we start to carry the deals from. One week with another, the year through, we make from 12*s.* to 15*s.*; the 15*s.* by men who have the preference when work is slack. We're busiest from July to Christmas. I'm the head of a gang or team of five, and I'm only paid as they are; but I have the preference if work is slack, and so have the men in my team. Five men must work at the Commercial, or none at all. We are paid in the dock at the contractor's office (there are three contractors), at four o'clock every Saturday evening. Drinking is kept down in our dock, and with my contractor drunkards are discharged. The men are all

satisfied but for the lowering of their wages. No doubt they can get labour cheaper still, there's so many idlers about. A dozen years back, or so, they did pay us in a public-house. Our deal-porters are generally sober men. The beer-men only come into the dock twice a-day—ten in the morning, and half-past three in the afternoon—and the men never exceed a pint at a time."

An older man, in the same employ, said:—

"I've known deal-portering for twenty years back, and then, at the Commercial Dock, men was paid in a public-house, and there was a good deal of drunkenness. The men weren't compelled to drink, but was expected to. In that point it's far better now. When I was first a deal-porter I could make half as much more as I do now. I don't complain of any body about the dock; it ain't their fault; but I do complain uncommon about the times, there's so little work and so many to snap at it."

From a stave-porter at the same dock I had the following account:—

"We are paid by the piece, and the price varies according to size from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* the thousand. Quebec staves, 6 feet long by 2 inches thick and a few inches broad, are 10*s.* the thousand; and other sizes are paid in the same proportion, down to 1*s.* 6*d.* We pack the bigger staves about our shoulders, resting one stave on another, more like a Jack-in-the-green than anything else, as our head comes out in the middle of 'em. Of the biggest, five is a good load, and we pack all sizes alike, folding our arms to hold the smaller staves better. Take it altogether, we make at stave-work what the deal-porters do at their work; and, indeed, we are deal-porters when staves isn't in. There's most staves comes to the Surrey Canal Dock."

A man who had worked at the West India Dock as a deal-porter informed me that the prices paid were the same as were paid by the Commercial and East Country Dock Companies before the reduction; but the supply of labour was uncertain and irregular, chiefly at the spring and fall, and in British-American ships. As many as 100 men, however, my informant stated, had been so employed at this dock, making from 15*s.* to 25*s.* a-week, or as much as 30*s.* on occasions, and without the drawback of any compulsory or "expected drinking." Such, as far as I could learn, is the condition of the labourers employed at these timber docks, where the drinking system and the payment of men in public-houses are not allowed. Concerning the state of the men employed at the other docks where the public-house system still continues, I had the following details.

A deal-porter at the Surrey Canal Dock stated: "I have worked a good many years in the Surrey Dock. There were four contractors at the Surrey Canal, but now there's one, and he pays the publican where we gets our beer all that's owing to us deal-porters, and the publican pays us every Saturday night. I can't say that we are compelled to take beer, certainly not when at our work in the dock, but we're expected to take it when we're waiting. I can't say either that we are discharged if we don't drink, but if we don't we are kept waiting late on a Saturday night, on an excuse of the publican's having no change, or something like that; and we feel that, somehow or other, if we don't drink we'll be left in the back-ground. Why don't the superintendent see us paid in the dock? He pays the company's labourers in the dock; they're corn-turners and rafters, and they are paid early, too. We now have 4*s.* 4*d.* a day of from 8 to 4, and 5*s.* 8*d.* from 6 to 6. It used to be, till four months back, I think, 4*s.* 10*d.* and 6*s.* 4*d.* In slack times, say six months in the year, we earns from 10*s.* to 12*s.* a-week; in the brisk time 30*s.*, and sometimes more; but 30*s.* is about the average. We are all paid at the public-house. We gathers from after five or so on the Saturday night. We are kept now and then till 12, and after 12, and it has been Sunday morning before we've got paid. There is more money spent, in course, up to 12 than up to 10. To get away at ½ past 9 is very early. I should say that half our earnings, except in our best weeks, goes to the publican for drink—more than half oft enough; if it's a bad week, all our earnings, or more. When it waxes late the wives, who've very likely been without Saturday's dinner or tea, will go to the publican's for their husbands, and they'll get to scold very likely, and then they'll get beaten very likely. We are chiefly married men with families. Pretty well all the deal-porters at the dock are drunkards; so there is misery enough for their families. The publican gives credit two following weeks, and encourages drinking, in course; but he does it quietly. He'll advance any man at work 1*s.* a night in money, besides trusting him for drink. I don't know how many we are; I should say from 50 to 200. In old age or accident, in course, we comes to the parish."

Other men whom I saw corroborated this statement, and some of their wives expressed great indignation at the system pursued in paying the labourers. None of them objected to their husbands having four pints of beer when actually at their work in the dock; it was against the publicans' temptations on Saturday and other nights that they bitterly inveighed.

At the earnest entreaty of a deal-porter's wife, I called on Saturday evening at the public house where the men were waiting to be paid. I walked into the tap-room as if I had called casually, and I was then unknown to all the deal-porters. The tap-room I found small, dark, dirty, and ill-ventilated. What with the tobacco-smoke and the heat of the weather, the room was most disagreeably close and hot. As well as I could count—for although it was a bright summer's evening the smoke and gloom rendered it somewhat difficult—there

were 24 men in this tap-room, which is fitted up with boxes, and the number completely filled the apartment. In an adjoining room, where was a small bar, there were some six or eight more deal-porters lounging about. These numbers, however, fluctuated, for men kept coming in and going out; but all the time I was present there might have been thirty men in the two hot, dirty little rooms. They were strong-looking men enough, and all sun-burnt; but amongst them were some with pinched features and white lips. There they sat, each man with his beer before him; there was not the slightest hilarity amongst them: there was not the least semblance of a convivial Saturday-night's gathering. The majority sat in silence. Some dozed; others drank or sipped at their pint measures, as if they must do it to while away the time. These deal-porters were generally dressed in corduroy, fustian, or strong, coarse, blue woollen jackets, with trousers of similar material, open big woollen waistcoats, and with coloured cotton handkerchiefs rolled round some thick substance in the way of a stock, and tied loosely round their necks over a striped cotton or loose linen shirt. All had rough bristly beards, intimating that their shaving was confined to the Sunday mornings. With respect to the system pursued at this dock in the payment of the deal-porters, it is right that I should state that I heard from many deal-porters praises of the superintendent, though certainly not of the contractor or the publican. I am glad to be able to state, however, that it is the determination of the company to attempt—and that, indeed, they are now attempting—the abolition of the system of public-house payment. Mr. M'Cannan, the superintendent of these docks, to whom I am indebted for many favours and courtesies, informed me that an arrangement was once made for the payment of the deal-porters in "an old box" (a sort of wooden office) within the dock; but the impatience and struggling of the men who had to wait a little while for their week's earnings almost demolished the frail timbers of the old box, and the attempt was abandoned. Within the dock the supply of beer is now limited to three times a-day, with a "vend" of half-a-pint a man each visit.

A middle-aged man, sunburnt and with much of the look of a seaman, gave me an account of his labour as a deal-porter at the East Country Dock. His room, and he with his wife and children had but one, was very sparely furnished, the principal article being a large clean bed. He complained that his poverty compelled him to live in the neighbourhood of some low lodging-houses, which caused all sorts of bad characters to resort to the locality, while cries of "murder" were not uncommon in the night.

"I have been a deal-porter," he said, "nearly twenty years, and for the last few years I have worked at the East Country Dock. Sometimes we work single-handed, sometimes in gangs of two, three, or four. The distance the deals have to be carried has a good deal to do with it, as to the number of the gang. We're paid nothing extra for distance. Mr. —— contracts with the Dock Company to do all the deal-portering. There are three gangs regularly employed, each with a master or foreman, or ganger, over them. They have always the preference. If three ships was to unload in one day, there would be one for each gang, and when more hands are wanted the men of the regular gangs are put over deal-porters such as me, who are not regularly employed, but on the look-out for piece-work or a day's work. We reckon when that happens that the gangers' men have 9*s.* for our 4*s.* We are paid at a public-house. The house belongs to the company. We pay 4*d.* a-pot for our beer, and we're expected to drink not less than four pints a-day. We're not obliged, you understand, but we're expected to drink this; and if we don't do as we're expected, why we're not wanted next time, that's all. But we're only expected to take our regular beer when work's brisk. We're not encouraged to run into debt for drink and work it out. Indeed, if a man be 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* in debt to the publican, he can't get credit for a bit of bread and cheese, or a drink of beer. We have good beer, but sometimes we'd rather be without it. But we can't do without some. Many deal-porters, I know, are terrible drunkards. We are paid the same as at the Commercial Dock, and were reduced about the same time. If I had a regular week's work now and no stop, I could make 26*s.*, less by 8*d.* a-day, or 4*s.* a-week, for beer. We're not expected to drink any gin. Before wages came down I could have made 30*s.* Our beer-money is stopped out of our earnings by the masters and paid to the publican. It's very seldom, indeed, we get a regular week's work, and take it the year through I don't clear 12*s.* a-week. To-day, there was only 16 men at work, but sometimes there's 80. From June to Christmas is the best time. Sometimes we may wait three or four days for a job. The regular pay for the Custom-house hours, from 8 to 4, is 4*s.* a-day to a deal-porter, but there's plenty to do it for what they can catch. Lots of Irish, sir? they'll work for anything, and is underselling all of us, because an Englishman and his family can't live like them. In the winter my family and me lived on 4*s.* or 5*s.* a-week, but I kept clear of the parish, though plenty of us have to come on the parish. Much in pawn, sir? I have so; look at my place. It was a nice place once. Most of what you may call the regular hands has been brought up as deal-porters. I don't know how many you may call regular at our dock, it varies; working and waiting for a turn; but we've no regular turn at work; there's 100 perhaps, or near about it. Ours is very hard and very dangerous work. Last year one man was killed by a fall, and two

had broken legs, and two had broken thighs; but it was an easy year for accidents. There is no fund to help or to bury us, only the parish. In a bad case we're carried to the Dreadnought, or some hospital. We are all of us dissatisfied. I wish I could have 2*s.* 6*d.* a-day for regular work, and I'd live 20 years longer than I shall now, with nothing to do one day and tearing my soul out with slaving work the others."

The result of all my inquiries shows that the deal-porters in nowise exaggerated the hardness or the danger of their labours. I saw them at work, walking along planks, some sloping from an elevated pile of timber to one somewhat more elevated, the plank vibrating as two men carrying a deal trod slowly and in measure along it, and so they proceed from one pile to another, beginning, perhaps, from the barge until the deals have been duly deposited. From a distance, when only the diminished thickness of the plank is visible, they appear to be walking on a mere stick; the space so traversed is generally short, but the mode of conveyance seems rude and primitive.

Account of the Casual Labourers.

In the foregoing narratives frequent mention has been made of the Casual Labourers at the timber-docks; and I now proceed to give some short account of the condition and earnings of this most wretched class. On the platform surrounding the Commercial Dock basins are a number whom I have heard described as "idlers," "pokers," and "casual labourers." These men are waiting in hopes of a job, which they rarely obtain until all the known hands have been set to work before them. The casual labourers confine themselves to no particular dock, but resort to the one which they account the most likely to want hands; and some even of the more regularly employed deal-porters change their docks occasionally for the same reason. These changes of locality puzzle the regular deal-porters in the estimation of the number of hands in their calling at the respective docks. On my visits the casual labourers were less numerous than usual, as the summer is the season when such persons consider that they have the best chance in the country. But I saw groups of 10 and 20 waiting about the docks; some standing alone, and some straggling in twos and threes, as they waited, all looking dull and listless. These men, thus wearisomely waiting, could not be called ragged, for they wore mostly strong canvas or fustian suits—large, and seemingly often washed jackets, predominating; and rents, and tatters are far less common in such attire than in woollen-cloth garments. From a man dressed in a large, coarse, canvas jacket, with worn corduroy trousers, and very heavy and very brown laced-leather boots, I had the following statement, in a somewhat provincial tone:—

"My father was a small farmer in Dorsetshire. I was middling educated, and may thank the parson for it. I can read the Bible and spell most of the names there. I was left destitute, and I had to shift for myself—that's nine year ago, I think. I've hungered, and I've ordered my bottle of wine since, sir. I got the wine when railways was all the go; and I was a navvy; but I didn't like wine-drinking; I drank it just for the fun of the thing, or mayhap because gentlemen drink it. The port was like rather rough beer, but stronger, certainly. Sherry I only had once or twice, and liked good ale better. I shifted my quarters every now and then till within two or three years ago, and then I tried my hand in London. At first Mr. —— (a second cousin of my father he was) helped me now and then, and he gave me odd jobs at portering for himself, as he was a grocer, and he got me odd jobs from other people besides. When I was a navvy I should at the best time have had my 50*s.* a-week, and more if it hadn't been for the tommy-shops; and I've had my 15*s.* a-week in portering in London for my cousin; but sometimes I came down to 10*s.*, and sometimes to 5*s.* My cousin died sudden, and I was very hard up after that. I made nothing at portering some weeks. I had no one to help me; and in the spring of last year—and very cold it often was—I've walked after 10, 11, or 12 at night, many a mile to lie down and sleep in any bye-place. I never stole, but have been hard tempted. I've thought of drowning myself, and of hanging myself, but somehow a penny or two came in to stop that. Perhaps I didn't seriously intend it. I begged sometimes of an evening. I stayed at lodging-houses, for one can't sleep out in bad weather, till I heard from one lodger that he took his turn at the Commercial Dock. He worked at timber, or corn, or anything; and so I went, about the cholera time last year, and waited, and run from one dock to another, because I was new and hadn't a chance like the old hands. I've had 14*s.* a-week sometimes; and many's the week I've had three, and more's the week I've had nothing at all. They've said, 'I don't know you.' I've lived on penny loaves—one or two a-day, when there was no work, and then I've begged. I don't know what the other people waiting at any of the docks got. I didn't talk to them much, and they didn't talk much to me."

THE DOCK-LABOURERS.

I shall now pass to the labourers at the docks. This transition I am induced to make, not because there is any affinity between the kinds of work performed at the two places; but because the docks constitute, as it were, a sort of home colony to Spitalfields, to which the unemployed weaver migrates in the hope of bettering his condition. From this it would be generally imagined that the work at the docks was either better paid, less heavy, or more easily, and therefore more regularly, obtained. So far from such being the fact, however, the labour at the docks appears to be not only more onerous, but doubly as precarious as that of weaving; while the average earnings of the entire class seems to be less. What, then, it will be asked, constitutes the inducement for the change? Why does the weaver abandon the calling of his life, and forsake an occupation that at least appears to have, and actually had in the days of better prices, a refining and intellectual tendency? Why does he quit his graceful art for the mere muscular labour of the human animal? This, we shall find, arises purely from a desire for some out-of-door employment. And it is a consequence of all skilled labour—since the acquirement of the skill is the result of long practice—that if the art to which the operative has been educated is abandoned, he must take to some unskilled labour as a means of subsistence. I pass, then, to the consideration of the incomings and condition of the dock-labourers of the metropolis, not because the class of labour is similar to that of weaving, but because the two classes of labourers are locally associated. I would rather have pursued some more systematic plan in my inquiries; but in the present state of ignorance as to the general occupation of the poor, system is impossible. I am unable to generalise, not being acquainted with the particulars; for each day's investigation brings me incidentally into contact with a means of living utterly unknown among the well-fed portion of society. All I can at present assert is, that the poor appear to admit of being classified according to their employments under three heads—artizans, labourers, and petty traders; the first class consisting of skilled, and the second of unskilled workmen; while the third comprises hawkers, costermongers, and such other small dealers, who are contradistinguished from the larger ones by bringing their wares to the consumer instead of leaving the consumer to seek the wares. Of the skilled workmen few are so poorly paid for their labour as not to obtain a sufficiency for the satisfaction of their wants. The amount of wages is generally considered above the sum required for the positive necessaries of life; that is to say, for appeasing an appetite or allaying a pain, rather than gratifying a desire. The class of Spitalfields weavers, however, appear to constitute a striking exception to the rule, from what cause I do not even venture to conjecture. But with the unskilled labourer the amount of remuneration is seldom much above subsistence-point, if it be not very frequently below it. Such a labourer, commercially considered, is, as it were, a human steam-engine, supplied with so much fuel in the shape of food, merely to set him in motion. If he can be made to perform the same amount of work with half the consumption, why a saving of one-half the expense is supposed to be effected. Indeed, the grand object in the labour-market of the present day appears to be to economise human fuel. If the living steam-engine can be made to work as long and as well with a less amount of coal, just so much the better is the result considered.

The dock-labourers are a striking instance of mere brute force with brute appetites. This class of labour is as unskilled as the power of a hurricane. Mere muscle is all that is needed; hence every human locomotive is capable of working there. All that is wanted is the power of moving heavy bodies from one place to another. Mr. Stuart Mill tells us that labour in the physical world is always and solely employed in putting objects in motion; and assuredly, if this be the principle of physical labour, the docks exhibit the perfection of human action. Dock-work is precisely the office that every kind of man is fitted to perform, and there we find every kind of man performing it. Those who are unable to live by the occupation to which they have been educated, can obtain a living there without any previous training. Hence we find men of every calling labouring at the docks. There are decayed and bankrupt master-butchers, master-bakers, publicans, grocers, old soldiers, old sailors, Polish refugees, broken-down gentlemen, discharged lawyers' clerks, suspended government clerks, almsmen, pensioners, servants, thieves—indeed, every one who wants a loaf, and is willing to work for it. The London Dock is one of the few places in the metropolis where men can get employment without either character or recommendation, so that the labourers employed there are naturally a most incongruous assembly. Each of the docks employs several hundred hands to ship and discharge the cargoes of the numerous vessels that enter; and as there are some six or seven of such docks attached to the metropolis, it may be imagined how large a number of individuals are dependent on them for their subsistence. At a rough calculation, there must be at least 20,000 souls getting their living by such means.

The London Dock.

Before proceeding to give an account of the London Dock itself, let me thus publicly tender my thanks to Mr. Powles, the intelligent and obliging secretary, for the ready manner in which he placed the statistics of the company at my service. Had I experienced from the deputy-superintendent the same courtesy and consideration, the present exposition of the state of the labourers employed in the London Dock would, doubtless, have been more full and complete. But the one gentleman seemed as anxious to withhold information as the other was to impart it. Indeed, I found in

the first instance, that the orders given by the deputy-superintendent throughout the dock to each of the different officers were, that no answers should be made to any inquiries I might put to them; and it was not until I had communicated my object to the secretary that I was able to obtain the least information concerning even the number of hands employed at different times, or the amount of wages paid to them.

I shall now give a brief statement of the character, condition, and capacity of the London Dock. After which, the description of the kind of labour performed there; and then the class of labourers performing it will follow in due order.

The London Dock occupies an area of ninety acres, and is situated in the three parishes of St. George, Shadwell, and Wapping. The population of those three parishes in 1841 was 55,500, and the number of inhabited houses 8000, which covered a space equal to 338 acres. This is in the proportion of twenty-three inhabited houses to an acre and seven individuals to each house. The number of persons to each inhabited house is, despite of the crowded lodging-houses with which it abounds, not beyond the average for all London. I have already shown that Bethnal-green, which is said to possess the greatest number of low-rented houses, had only, upon an average, seventeen inhabited houses to each acre, while the average through London was but 5·5 houses per acre. So that it appears that in the three parishes of St. George's-in-the-East, Shadwell, and Wapping, the houses are more than four times more crowded than in the other parts of London, and more numerous by half as many again than those even in the low-rented district of Bethnal-green. This affords us a good criterion as to the character of the neighbourhood, and, consequently, of the people living in the vicinity of the London Dock.

The courts and alleys round about the dock swarm with low lodging-houses; and are inhabited either by the dock-labourers, sack-makers, watermen, or that peculiar class of the London poor who pick up a living by the water-side. The open streets themselves have all more or less a maritime character. Every other shop is either stocked with gear for the ship or for the sailor. The windows of one house are filled with quadrants and bright brass sextants, chronometers, and huge mariners' compasses, with their cards trembling with the motion of the cabs and waggons passing in the street. Then comes the sailors' cheap shoe-mart, rejoicing in the attractive sign of "Jack and his Mother." Every public-house is a "Jolly Tar," or something equally taking. Then come sailmakers, their windows stowed with ropes and lines smelling of tar. All the grocers are provision-agents, and exhibit in their windows the cases of meat and biscuits; and every article is warranted to keep in any climate. The corners of the streets, too, are mostly monopolised by slopsellers; their windows parti-coloured with bright red-and-blue flannel shirts; the doors nearly blocked up with hammocks and "well-oiled nor'-westers;" and the front of the house itself nearly covered with canvas trousers, rough pilot-coats, and shiny black dreadnoughts. The passengers alone would tell you that you were in the maritime districts of London. Now you meet a satin-waistcoated mate, or a black sailor with his large fur cap, or else a Custom-house officer in his brass-buttoned jacket.

The London Dock can accommodate 500 ships, and the warehouses will contain 232,000 tons of goods. The entire structure cost 4,000,000*l.* in money: the tobacco warehouses alone cover five acres of ground. The wall surrounding the dock cost 65,000*l.* One of the wine-vaults has an area of seven acres, and in the whole of them there is room for stowing 60,000 pipes of wine. The warehouses round the wharfs are exposing from their extent, but are much less lofty than those at St. Katherine's; and being situated at some distance from the dock, goods cannot be craned out of the ship's hold and stowed away at one operation. According to the last half-yearly report, the number of ships which entered the dock during the six months ending the 31st of May last was 704, measuring upwards of 195,000 tons. The amount of earnings during that period was 230,000*l.* and odd, and the amount of expenditure nearly 121,000*l.* The stock of goods in the warehouses last May was upwards of 170,000 tons.

As you enter the dock the sight of the forest of masts in the distance, and the tall chimneys vomiting clouds of black smoke, and the many coloured flags flying in the air, has a most peculiar effect; while the sheds with the monster wheels arching through the roofs look like the paddle-boxes of huge steamers. Along the quay you see, now men with their faces blue with indigo, and now gaugers, with their long brass-tipped rule dripping with spirit from the cask they have been probing. Then will come a group of flaxen-haired sailors chattering German; and next a black sailor, with a cotton handkerchief twisted turban-like round his head. Presently a blue-smocked butcher, with fresh meat and a bunch of cabbages in the tray on his shoulder; and shortly afterwards a mate, with green paroquets in a wooden cage. Here you will see sitting on a bench a sorrowful-looking woman, with new bright cooking tins at her feet, telling you she is an emigrant preparing for her voyage. As you pass along this quay the air is pungent with tobacco; on that it overpowers you with the fumes of rum; then you are nearly sickened with the stench of hides, and huge bins of horns; and shortly afterwards the atmosphere is fragrant with coffee and spice. Nearly everywhere you meet stacks of cork, or else yellow bins of sulphur, or lead-coloured copper-ore. As you enter this warehouse, the flooring is sticky, as if it had been newly tarred, with the sugar that has leaked through the casks; and as you descend into the dark vaults, you see long lines of lights hanging from the black arches, and lamps flitting about midway. Here you sniff the fumes of the wine, and there the peculiar fungus-smell of dry rot; then the jumble of sounds as you pass along the dock blends in anything but sweet concord. 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 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. Here the heavily-laden ships are down far below the quay, and you descend to them by ladders; whilst in another basin they are high up out of the water, so that their green copper sheathing is almost level with the eye of the passenger; while above his head a long line of bowsprits stretches far over the quay; and from them hang spars and planks as a gangway to each ship.

This immense establishment is worked by from one to three thousand hands, according as the business is either brisk or slack. Out of this number there are always 400 to 500 permanent labourers, receiving on an average 16*s.* 6*d.* per week, with the exception of coopers, carpenters, smiths, and other mechanics, who are paid the usual wages of those crafts. Besides these are many hundred—from 1000 to 2500—casual labourers, who are engaged at the rate of 2*s.* 6*d.* per day in the summer and 2*s.* 4*d.* in the winter months. Frequently, in case of many arrivals, extra hands are hired in the course of the day, at the rate of 4*d.* per hour. For the permanent labourers a recommendation is required; but for the casual labourers no character is demanded. The number of the casual hands engaged by the day depends, of course, upon the amount of work to be done; and I find that the total number of labourers in the dock varies from 500 to 3000 and odd. On the 4th May, 1849, the number of hands engaged, both permanent and casual, was 2794; on the 26th of the same month it was 3012; and on the 30th it was 1189. These appear to be the extreme of the variation for that year: the fluctuation is due to a greater or less number of ships entering the dock. The lowest number of ships entering the dock in any one week last year was 29, while the highest number was 141. This rise and fall is owing to the prevalence of easterly winds, which serve to keep the ships back, and so make the business slack. Now, deducting the lowest number of hands employed from the highest number, we have no less than 1823 individuals who obtain so precarious a subsistence by their labour at the docks, that by the mere shifting of the wind they may be all deprived of their daily bread. Calculating the wages at 2*s.* 6*d.* per day for each, the company would have paid 376*l.* 10*s.* to the 3012 hands employed on the 26th of May 1849; while only 148*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.* would have been paid to the 1189 hands engaged on the 30th of the same month. Hence, not only would 1823 hands have been thrown out of employ by the chopping of the wind, but the labouring men dependent upon the business of the docks for their subsistence would in one day have been deprived of 227*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* This will afford the reader some faint idea of the precarious character of the subsistence obtained by the labourers employed in this neighbourhood, and, consequently, as it has been well proved, that all men who obtain their livelihood by irregular employment are the most intemperate and improvident of all.

It will be easy to judge what may be the condition and morals of a class who to-day, as a body, may earn near upon 400*l.*, and to-morrow only 150*l.* I had hoped to have been able to have shown the fluctuations in the total amount of wages paid to the dock-labourers for each week throughout the whole year; and so, by contrasting the comparative affluence and comfort of one week with the distress and misery of the other, to have afforded the reader some more vivid idea of the body of men who are performing, perhaps, the heaviest labour, and getting the most fickle provision of all. But still I will endeavour to impress him with some faint idea of the struggle there is to gain the uncertain daily bread. Until I saw with my own eyes this scene of greedy despair, I could not have believed that there was so mad an eagerness to work, and so biting a want of it, among so vast a body of men. A day or two before I had sat at midnight in the room of the starving weaver; and as I heard him tell his bitter story, there was a patience in his misery that gave it more an air of heroism than desperation. But in the scenes I have lately witnessed the want has been positively tragic, and the struggle for life partaking of the sublime. The reader must first remember what kind of men the casual labourers generally are. They are men, it should be borne in mind, who are shut out from the usual means of life by the want of character. Hence, you are not astonished to hear from those who are best acquainted with the men, that there are hundreds among the body who are known thieves, and who go to the docks to seek a living; so that, if taken for any past offence, their late industry may plead for some little lenity in their punishment.

He who wishes to behold one of the most extraordinary and least-known scenes of this metropolis, should wend his way to the London Dock gates at half-past seven in the morning. There he will see congregated within the principal entrance masses of men of all grades, looks, and kinds. Some in half-fashioned surtouts burst at the elbows, with the dirty shirts

showing through. Others in greasy sporting jackets, with red pimpled faces. Others in the rags of their half-slang gentility, with the velvet collars of their paletots worn through to the canvas. Some in rusty black, with their waistcoats fastened tight up to the throat. Others, again, with the knowing thieves' curl on each side of the jaunty cap; whilst here and there you may see a big-whiskered Pole, with his hands in the pockets of his plaited French trousers. Some loll outside the gates, smoking the pipe which is forbidden within; but these are mostly Irish.

Presently you know, by the stream pouring through the gates and the rush towards particular spots, that the "calling foremen" have made their appearance. Then begins the scuffling and scrambling forth of countless hands high in the air, to catch the eye of him whose voice may give them work. As the foreman calls from a book the names, some men jump up on the backs of the others, so as to lift themselves high above the rest, and attract the notice of him who hires them. All are shouting. Some cry aloud his surname, some his christian name, others call out their own names, to remind him that they are there. Now the appeal is made in Irish blarney—now in broken English. Indeed, it is a sight to sadden the most callous, to see thousands of men struggling for only one day's hire; the scuffle being made the fiercer by the knowledge that hundreds out of the number there assembled must be left to idle the day out in want. To look in the faces of that hungry crowd is to see a sight that must be ever remembered. Some are smiling to the foreman to coax him into remembrance of them; others, with their protruding eyes, eager to snatch at the hoped-for pass. For weeks many have gone there, and gone through the same struggle—the same cries; and have gone away, after all, without the work they had screamed for.

From this it might be imagined that the work was of a peculiarly light and pleasant kind, and so, when I first saw the scene, I could not help imagining myself. But, in reality, the labour is of that heavy and continuous character that you would fancy only the best fed could stand it. The work may be divided into three classes. 1. Wheel-work, or that which is moved by the muscles of the legs and weight of the body; 2. jigger, or winch-work, or that which is moved by the muscles of the arm. In each of these the labourer is stationary; but in the truck work, which forms the third class, the labourer has to travel over a space of ground greater or less in proportion to the distance which the goods have to be removed.

The wheel-work is performed somewhat on the system of the treadwheel, with the exception that the force is applied inside instead of outside the wheel. From six to eight men enter a wooden cylinder or drum, upon which are nailed battens, and the men laying hold of ropes commence treading the wheel round, occasionally singing the while, and stamping time in a manner that is pleasant, from its novelty. The wheel is generally about sixteen feet in diameter and eight to nine feet broad; and the six or eight men treading within it, will lift from sixteen to eighteen hundred weight, and often a ton, forty times in an hour, an average of twenty-seven feet high. Other men will get out a cargo of from 800 to 900 casks of wine, each cask averaging about five hundred weight, and being lifted about eighteen feet, in a day and a half. At trucking each man is said to go on an average thirty miles a-day, and two-thirds of that time he is moving 1½ cwt. at six miles and a-half per hour.

This labour, though requiring to be seen to be properly understood, must still appear so arduous that one would imagine it was not of that tempting nature, that 3000 men could be found every day in London desperate enough to fight and battle for the privilege of getting 2*s.* 6*d.* by it; and even if they fail in "getting taken on" at the commencement of the day, that they should then retire to the appointed yard, there to remain hour after hour in the hope that the wind might blow them some stray ship, so that other gangs might be wanted, and the calling foreman seek them there. It is a curious sight to see the men waiting in these yards to be hired at 4*d.* per hour, for such are the terms given in the after part of the day. There, seated on long benches ranged against the wall, they remain, some telling their miseries and some their crimes to one another, whilst others doze away their time. Rain or sunshine, there can always be found plenty ready to catch the stray 1*s.* or 8*d.* worth of work. By the size of the shed you can tell how many men sometimes remain there in the pouring rain, rather than run the chance of losing the stray hours' work. Some loiter on the bridges close by, and presently, as their practised eye or ear tells them that the calling foreman is in want of another gang, they rush forward in a stream towards the gate, though only six or eight at most can be hired out of the hundred or more that are waiting there. Again the same mad fight takes place as in the morning. There is the same jumping on benches, the same raising of hands, the same entreaties, and the same failure as before. It is strange to mark the change that takes place in the manner of the men when the foreman has left. Those that have been engaged go smiling to their labour. Indeed, I myself met on the quay just such a chuckling gang passing to their work. Those who are left behind give vent to their disappointment in abuse of him whom they had been supplicating and smiling at a few minutes before. Upon talking with some of the unsuccessful ones, they assured me that the men who had supplanted them had only gained their ends by bribing the foreman who had engaged them. This I made a point of inquiring into, and the deputy-warehousekeeper, of whom I sought the information, soon assured me, by the production of his book, that he himself was the person who chose the men, the foreman merely executing his orders: and this, indeed, I found to be the custom throughout the dock.

At four o'clock the eight hours' labour ceases, and then comes the paying. The names of the men are called out of the muster-book, and each man, as he answers to the cry, has half-a-crown given to him. So rapidly is this done that, in a quarter of an hour, the whole of the men have had their wages paid them. They then pour towards the gate. Here two constables stand, and as each man passes through the wicket, he takes his hat off, and is felt from head to foot by the dock-officers and attendant: and yet, with all the want, misery, and temptation, the millions of pounds of property amid which they work, and the thousands of pipes and hogsheads of wines and spirits about the docks, I am informed, upon the best authority, that there are on an average but thirty charges of drunkenness in the course of the year, and only eight of dishonesty every month. This may, perhaps, arise from the vigilance of the superintendents; but to see the distressed condition of the men who seek and gain employment in the London Dock, it appears almost incredible, that out of so vast a body of men, without means and without character, there should be so little vice or crime. There still remains one curious circumstance to be added in connexion with the destitution of the dock-labourers. Close to the gate by which they are obliged to leave, sits on a coping-stone the refreshment man, with his two large canvas pockets tied in front of him, and filled with silver and copper, ready to give change to those whom he has trusted with their dinner that day until they were paid.

As the men passed slowly on in a double file towards the gate, I sat beside the victualler, and asked him what constituted the general dinner of the labourers. He told me that he supplied them with pea-soup, bread and cheese, saveloys, and beer. "Some," he said, "had twice as much as others. Some had a pennyworth, some had eatables and a pint of beer; others, two pints, and others four, and some spend their whole half-crown in eating and drinking." This gave me a more clear insight into the destitution of the men who stood there each morning. Many of them, it was clear, came to the gate without the means of a day's meal, and, being hired, were obliged to go on credit for the very food they worked upon. What wonder, then, that the calling foreman should be often carried many yards away by the struggle and rush of the men around him seeking employment at his hands! One gentleman assured me that he had been taken off his feet and hurried a distance of a quarter of a mile by the eagerness of the impatient crowd around him.

Having made myself acquainted with the character and amount of the labour performed, I next proceeded to make inquiries into the condition of the labourers themselves, and thus to learn the average amount of their wages from so precarious an occupation. For this purpose, hearing that there were several cheap lodging-houses in the neighbourhood, I thought I should be better enabled to arrive at an average result by conversing with the inmates of them, and thus endeavouring to elicit from them some such statements of their earnings at one time and at another, as would enable me to judge what was their average amount throughout the year. I had heard the most pathetic accounts from men in the waiting-yard; how they had been six weeks without a day's hire. I had been told of others who had been known to come there day after day in the hope of getting sixpence, and who lived upon the stray pieces of bread given to them in charity by their fellow-labourers. Of one person I was informed by a gentleman who had sought out his history in pure sympathy, from the wretchedness of the man's appearance. The man had once been possessed of 500*l.* a-year, and had squandered it all away; and through some act or acts that I do not feel myself at liberty to state, had lost caste, character, friends, and everything that could make life easy to him. From that time he had sunk and sunk in the world, until, at last, he had found him, with a lodging-house for his dwelling-place, the associate of thieves and pickpockets. His only means of living at this time was bones and rag-grubbing; and for this purpose the man would wander through the streets at three every morning, to see what little bits of old iron, or rag, or refuse bone he could find in the roads. His principal source of income I am informed, from such a source as precludes the possibility of doubt, was by picking up the refuse ends of cigars, drying them, and selling them at one-halfpenny per ounce, as tobacco, to the thieves with whom he lodged.

However, to arrive at a fair estimate as to the character and the earnings of labourers generally, I directed my guide, after the closing of the docks, to take me to one of the largest lodging-houses in the neighbourhood. The young man who was with me happened to know one of the labourers who was lodging there, and having called him out, I told him the object of my visit, and requested to be allowed to obtain information from the labourers assembled within. The man assented, and directing me to follow him, he led me through a narrow passage into a small room on the ground floor, in which sat, I should think, at least twenty or thirty of the most wretched objects I ever beheld. Some were shoeless—some coatless—others shirtless; and from all these came so rank and foul a stench, that I was sickened with a moment's inhalation of the fetid atmosphere.

Some of the men were seated in front of a table, eating soup out of yellow basins. As they saw me enter, they gathered round me; and I was proceeding to tell them what information I wished to gather from them, when in swaggered a drunken man, in a white canvas suit, who announced himself as the landlord of the place, asking whether there had been a robbery in the house, that people should come in without saying "with your leave" or "by your leave." I explained to him that I had mistaken the person who had introduced me for the proprietor of the house, when he grew very abusive, and declared I should not remain there. Some of the men, however, swore as lustily that I should; and after a time succeeded in pacifying him. He then bade me let him hear what I wanted, and I again briefly stated the object of my visit. I told him I wished to publish the state of the dock-labourers in the newspapers, on which the man burst into an ironical laugh, and vowed with an oath that *he* knowed me, and that the men were a set of b——y flats to be done in that way. "I know who you are well enough," he shouted. I requested to be informed for whom he took me. "Take you for!" he cried; "why, for a b——y spy! You come here from the Secretary of State, you know you do, to see how many men I've got in the house, and what kind they are." This caused a great stir among the company, and I could see that I was mistaken for one of the detective police. I was located in so wretched a court, and so far removed from the street, with a dead wall opposite, that I knew any atrocity might be committed there almost unheard: indeed, the young man who had brought me to the house had warned me of its dangerous character before I went; but, from the kind reception I had met with from other labourers, I had no fear. At last the landlord flung the door wide open, and shouted from his clenched teeth, "By G—! if you ain't soon mizzled, I'll crack your b——y skull open for you!" And so saying, he prepared to make a rush towards me, but was held back by the youth who had brought me to the place. I felt that it would be dangerous to remain; and rising, informed the man that I would not trouble him to proceed to extremities.

It was now so late that I felt it would be imprudent to venture into another such house that night; so, having heard of the case of a dock-labourer who had formerly been a clerk in a Government office, I made the best of my way to the place where he resided.

He lived in a top back-room in a small house, in another dismal court. I was told by the woman who answered the door to mount the steep stairs, as she shrieked out to the man's wife to show me a light. I found the man seated on the edge of a bed, with six young children grouped round him. They were all shoeless, and playing on the bed was an infant with only a shirt to cover it. The room was about 7 feet square, and, with the man and his wife, there were eight human creatures living in it. In the middle of the apartment, upon a chair, stood a washing-tub foaming with fresh suds, and from the white crinkled hands of the wife it was plain that I had interrupted her in her washing. On one chair, close by, was a heap of dirty linen, and on another was flung the newly-washed. There was a saucepan on the handful of fire, and the only ornaments on the mantelpiece were two flat-irons and a broken shaving-glass. On the table at which I took my notes there was the bottom of a broken ginger-beer bottle filled with soda. The man was without a coat, and wore an old tattered and greasy black satin waistcoat. Across the ceiling ran strings to hang clothes upon. On my observing to the woman that I supposed she dried the clothes in that room, she told me that they were obliged to do so, and it gave them all colds and bad eyes. On the floor was a little bit of matting, and on the shelves in the corner one or two plates. In answer to my questionings the man told me he had been a dock-labourer for five or six years. He was in Her Majesty's Stationery Office. When there he had 150*l.* a-year. Left through accepting a bill of exchange for 87*l.* He was suspended eight years ago, and had petitioned the Lords of the Treasury, but never could get any answer. After that he was out for two or three years, going about doing what he could get, such as writing letters. "Then," said the wife, "you went into Mr. What's-his-name's shop." "Oh, yes," answered the man, "I had six months' employment at Camberwell. I had 12*s.* a-week and my board there."

Before this they had lived upon their things. He had a good stock of furniture and clothing at that time. The wife used to go out for a day's work when she could get it. She used to go out shelling peas in the pea season—washing or charing—anything she could get to do. His father was a farmer, well to do. He should say the old man was worth a good bit of money, and he would have some property at his death.

"Oh, sir," said the woman, "we have been really very bad off indeed; sometimes without even food or firing in the depth of winter. It is not until recently that we have been to say very badly off, because within the last four years has been our worst trouble. We had a very good house—a seven-roomed house in Walworth—and well furnished and very comfortable. We were in business for ourselves before we went there. We were grocers, near Oxford-street. We lived there at the time when Aldis the pawnbroker's was burnt down. We might have done well if we had not given so much credit."

"I've got," said the husband, "about 90*l.* owing me down there now. It's quite out of character to think of getting it. At Clerkenwell I got a job at a grocer's shop. The master was in the Queen's-bench Prison, and the mistress employed me at 12*s.* a-week until he went through the Insolvent Debtor's Court. When he passed the Court the business was sold, and of course he didn't want me after that. I've done nothing else but this dock-labouring work for this long time. Took to it first because I found there was no chance of anything else. The character with the bill transaction was very much against me: so, being unable to obtain employment in a wholesale house, or anywhere else, I applied to the docks. They require no character at all there. I think I may sometimes have had 7 or 8 days altogether. Then I was out for a fortnight or three weeks perhaps; and then we might get a day or two again, and on some occasion such a thing as—well, say July, August, September, and October. I was in work one year almost the whole of those months—three years ago I think that was. Then I did not get anything, excepting now and then, not more than about three days' work until the next March; that was owing to the slack time. The first year I might say that I might have been employed about one-third of the time. The second year I was employed six months. The third year I was very unfortunate. I was laid up for three months with bad eyes and a quinsey in the throat, through working in an ice ship. I've scarcely had anything to do since then. That is nearly 18 months ago; and since then I have had casual employment, perhaps one, and sometimes two days a-week. It would average 5*s.* a-week the whole year. Within the last few weeks I have, through a friend, applied at a shipping-merchant's, and within the month I have had five days' work with them, and nothing else, except writing a letter, which I had 2*d.* for—that's all the employment I've met with myself. My wife has been at employment for the last three months, she has a place she goes to work at. She has 3*s.* a-week for washing, for charing, and for mangling: the party my wife works for has a mangle, and I go sometimes to help; for if she has got 6*d.* worth of washing to do at home, than I go to turn the mangle for an hour instead of her,—she's not strong enough."

"We buy most bread," said the wife, "and a bit of firing, and I do manage on a Saturday night to get them a bit of meat for Sunday if I possibly can; but what with the soap, and one thing and another, that's the only day they do get a bit of meat, unless I've a bit given me. As for clothing, I'm sure I can't get them any unless I have that given me, poor little things."

"Yes, but we have managed to get a little bread lately," said the man. "When bread was 11*d.* a loaf, that was the time when we was worse off. Of course we had the seven children alive then. We buried one only three months ago. She was an afflicted little creature for 16 or 17 months: it was one person's work to attend to her, and was very badly off for a few months then. We've known what it was sometimes to go without bread and coals in the depth of winter. Last Christmas two years we did so for the whole day, until the wife came home in the evening and brought it might be 6*d.* or 9*d.* according how long she worked. I was looking after them. I was at home ill. I have known us to sit several days and not have more than 6*d.* to feed and warm the whole of us for the whole of the day. We'll buy half-a-quartern loaf, that'll be 4½*d.* or sometimes 5*d.*, and then we have a penny for coals, that would be pretty nigh all that we could have for our money. Sometimes we get a little oatmeal and make gruel. We had hard work to keep the children warm at all. What with their clothes and what we had, we did as well as we could. My children is very contented; give 'em bread, and they're as happy as all the world. That's one comfort. For instance, to-day we've had half-a quartern loaf, and we had a piece left of last night's after I had come home. I had been earning some money yesterday. We had 2 oz. of butter, and I had this afternoon a quarter of an oz. of tea and a pennyworth of sugar. When I was ill I've had two or three of the children round me at a time, fretting for want of food. That was at the time I was ill. A friend gave me half a sovereign to bury my child. The parish provided me with a coffin, and it cost me about 3*s.* besides. We didn't have her taken away from here, not as a parish funeral exactly. I agreed that if he would fetch it, and let it stand in an open space that he had got there, near his shop, until the Saturday, which was the time, I would give the undertaker 3*s.* to let a man come with a pall to throw over the coffin, so that it should not be seen exactly it was a parish funeral. Even the people in the house don't know, not one of them, that it was buried in that way. I had to give 1*s.* 6*d.* for a pair of shoes before I could follow my child to the grave, and we paid 1*s.* 9*d.* for rent, all out of the half sovereign. I think there's some people at the docks a great deal worse off than us. I should say there's men go down there and stand at that gate from 7 to 12, and then they may get called in and earn 1*s.*, and that only for two or three days in the week, after spending the whole of their time there."

The scenes witnessed at the London Dock were of so painful a description, the struggle for one day's work—the scramble for twenty-four hours' extra-subsistence and extra-life were of so tragic a character, that I was anxious to ascertain if possible the exact number of individuals in and around the metropolis who live by dock labour. I have said that at one of the docks alone I found that 1823 stomachs would be deprived of food by the mere chopping of the breeze. "It's an ill wind," says the proverb, "that blows nobody good;" and until I came to investigate the condition of the dock-labourer I could not have believed it possible that near upon 2000 souls in one place alone

lived, chameleon-like, upon the air, or that an easterly wind, despite the wise saw, could deprive so many of bread. It is indeed "a nipping and an eager air." That the sustenance of thousands of families should be as fickle as the very breeze itself; that the weathercock should be the index of daily want or daily ease to such a vast number of men, women, and children, was a climax of misery and wretchedness that I could not have imagined to exist; and since that I have witnessed such scenes of squalor, and crime, and suffering, as oppress the mind even to a feeling of awe.

The docks of London are to a superficial observer the very focus of metropolitan wealth. The cranes creak with the mass of riches. In the warehouses are stored goods that are as it were ingots of untold gold. Above and below ground you see piles upon piles of treasure that the eye cannot compass. The wealth appears as boundless as the very sea it has traversed. The brain aches in an attempt to comprehend the amount of riches before, above, and beneath it. There are acres upon acres of treasure, more than enough, one would fancy, to stay the cravings of the whole world, and yet you have but to visit the hovels grouped round about all this amazing excess of riches to witness the same amazing excess of poverty. If the incomprehensibility of the wealth rises to sublimity, assuredly the want that co-exists with it is equally incomprehensible and equally sublime. Pass from the quay and warehouses to the courts and alleys that surround them, and the mind is as bewildered with the destitution of the one place as it is with the superabundance of the other. Many come to see the riches, but few the poverty, abounding in absolute masses round the far-famed port of London.

According to the official returns, there belonged to this port on the 31st of December, 1842, very nearly 3000 ships, of the aggregate burden of 600,000 tons. Besides that there were 239 steamers, of 50,000 tons burden; and the crews of the entire number of ships and steamers amounted to 35,000 men and boys. The number of British and foreign ships that entered the port of London during the same year was 6400 and odd, whose capacity was upwards of a million and a quarter of tons, and the gross amount of customs duly collected upon their cargoes was very nearly 12,000*l.* of money. So vast an amount of shipping and commerce, it has been truly said, was never concentrated in any other single port.

Now, against this we must set the amount of misery that co-exists with it. We have shown that the mass of men dependent for their bread upon the business of only one of the docks are, by the shifting of the breeze, occasionally deprived in one day of no less than 220*l.*, the labourers at the London Dock earning as a body near upon 400*l.* to-day, and to-morrow scarcely 150*l.* These docks, however, are but one of six similar establishments—three being on the north and three on the south side of the Thames—and all employing a greater or less number of hands, equally dependent upon the winds for their subsistence. Deducting, then, the highest from the lowest number of labourers engaged at the London Dock—the extremes according to the books are under 500 and over 3000—we have as many as 2500 individuals deprived of a day's work and a living by the prevalence of an easterly wind; and calculating that the same effect takes place at the other docks—the East and West India for instance, St. Katherine's, Commercial, Grand Surrey, and East Country, to a greater or less extent, and that the hands employed to load and unload the vessels entering and quitting all these places are only four times more than those required at the London Dock, we have as many as 12,000 individuals or families whose daily bread is as fickle as the wind itself; whose wages, in fact, are one day collectively as much as 1500*l.* and the next as low as 500*l.*, so that 8000 men are frequently thrown out of employ, while the earnings of the class to day amount to 1000*l.* less than they did yesterday.

It would be curious to take an average number of days that easterly winds prevail in London throughout the year, and so arrive at an estimate of the exact time that the above 8000 men are unemployed in the course of twelve months. This would give us some idea of the amount of their average weekly earnings. By the labourers themselves I am assured that, taking one week with another, they do not gain 5*s.* weekly throughout the year. I have made a point of visiting and interrogating a large number of them, in order to obtain some definite information respecting the extent of their income, and have found in only one instance an account kept of the individual earnings. In that case the wages averaged within a fraction of 13*s.* per week, the total sum gained since the beginning of the year being 25*l.* odd. I should state, however, that the man earning thus much was pointed out to me as one of the most provident of the casual labourers, and one, moreover, who is generally employed. "If it is possible to get work, he'll have it," was said of him; "there's not a lazy bone in his skin." Besides this he had done a considerable quantity of piece-work, so that altogether the man's earnings might be taken as the very extreme made by the best kind of "extra hands."

The man himself gives the following explanation as to the state of the labour-market at the London Dock. "He has had a good turn of work," he says, since he has been there. "Some don't get half what he does. He's not always employed, excepting when the business is in anyway brisk, but when a kind of a slack comes the recommended men get the preference of the work, and the extras have nothing to do. This is the best sumner he has had since he has been in London. Has had a good bit of piece-work. Obliged to live as he does because he can't depend on work. Isn't certain of the second day's work. He's paid off every night, and can't say whether or not they'll want him on the morrow." The account of his wages was written in pencil on the cover of an old memorandum-book, and ran as follows:

	£. s. d.		£. s. d.	
Earned by day-work from 1st Jan. to 1st Aug. 1849	16 11 6	averaging	0 11 10	per week
By piece-work in August . . .	5 5 8	„	1 6 5	„
By day work from 1st Sept to 1st Oct.	3 8 7	„	0 17 1¾	„
Total . . .	£25 5 9	„	£2 15 4¾	„

If, then, 13*s.* be the average amount of weekly earnings by the most provident, industrious, and fortunate of the casual labourers at the docks—and that at the best season—it may be safely asserted that the lowest grade of workmen there do not gain more than 5*s.* per week throughout the year. It should be remembered that the man himself says "some don't get half what he does," and from a multiplicity of inquiries that I have made upon the subject this appears to be about the truth. Moreover, we should bear in mind that the average weekly wages of the dock-labourer, miserable as they are, are rendered even more wretched by the uncertain character of the work on which they depend. Were the income of the casual labourer at the docks 5*s.* per week from one year's end to another the workman would know exactly how much he had to subsist upon, and might therefore be expected to display some little providence and temperance in the expenditure of his wages. But where the means of subsistence occasionally rise to 15*s.* a-week, and occasionally sink to nothing, it is absurd to look for prudence, economy, or moderation. Regularity of habits are incompatible with irregularity of income; indeed, the very conditions necessary for the formation of any habit whatsoever are, that the act or thing to which we are to become habituated should be repeated at frequent and regular intervals. It is a moral impossibility that the class of labourers who are only occasionally employed should be either generally industrious or temperate—both industry and temperance being habits produced by constancy of employment and uniformity of income. Hence, where the greatest fluctuation occurs in the labour, there, of course, will be the greatest idleness and improvidence; where the greatest want generally is, there we shall find the greatest occasional excess; where from the uncertainty of the occupation prudence is most needed, there, strange to say, we shall meet with the highest imprudence of all. "Previous to the formation of a canal in the north of Ireland," says Mr. Porter, in "The Progress of the Nation," "the men were improvident even to recklessness. Such work as they got before came at uncertain intervals, the wages insufficient for the comfortable sustenance of their families were wasted at the whiskey-shop, and the men appeared to be sunk in a state of hopeless degradation. From the moment, however, that work was offered to them which was constant in its nature and certain in its duration, men who before had been idle and dissolute were converted into sober, hard-working labourers, and proved themselves kind and careful husbands and fathers; and it is said that, notwithstanding the distribution of several hundred pounds weekly in wages, the whole of which must be considered as so much additional money placed in their hands, the consumption of whisky was absolutely and permanently diminished in the district. Indeed it is a fact worthy of notice, as illustrative of the tendency of the times of pressure, and consequently of deficient and uncertain employment, to increase spirit-drinking, that whilst in the year 1836—a year of the greatest prosperity—the tax on British spirits amounted only to 2,390,000*l.*; yet, under the privations of 1841, the English poorer classes paid no less than 2,600,000*l.* in taxes upon the liquor they consumed—thus spending upwards of 200,000*l.* more in drink at a time when they were less able to afford it, and so proving that a fluctuation in the income of the working-classes is almost invariably attended with an excess of improvidence in the expenditure. Moreover, with reference to the dock-labourers, we have been informed, upon unquestionable authority, that some years back there were near upon 220 ships waiting to be discharged in one dock alone; and such was the pressure of business then, that it became necessary to obtain leave of Her Majesty's Customs to increase the usual time of daily labour from eight to twelve hours. The men employed, therefore, earned 50 per cent more than they were in the habit of doing at the briskest times; but so far from the extra amount of wages being devoted to increase the comforts of their homes, it was principally spent in public-houses. The riot and confusion thus created in the neighbourhood were such as had never been known before, and indeed were so general among the workmen, that every respectable person in the immediate vicinity expressed a hope that such a thing as "overtime" would never occur again.

It may then be safely asserted, that though the wages of the casual labourer at the docks

average 5*s.* per week, still the weekly earnings are of so precarious and variable a nature, that when the time of the men is fully employed, the money which is gained over and above the amount absolutely required for subsistence is almost sure to be spent in intemperance, and that when there is little or no demand for their work, and their gains are consequently insufficient for the satisfaction of their appetites, they and those who depend upon their labour for their food must at least want, if not starve. The improvidence of the casual dock-labourer is due, therefore, not to any particular malformation of his moral constitution, but to the precarious character of his calling. His vices are the vices of ordinary human nature. Ninety-nine in every hundred similarly circumstanced would commit similar enormities. If the very winds could whistle away the food and firing of wife and children, I doubt much whether, after a week's or a month's privation, we should many of us be able to prevent ourselves from falling into the very same excesses.

It is consoling to moralise in our easy chairs, after a good dinner, and to assure ourselves that we should do differently. Self-denial is not very difficult when our stomachs are full and our backs are warm; but let us live a month of hunger and cold, and assuredly we should be as self-indulgent as they.

I have devoted some time to the investigation of the state of the casual labourers at the other docks, and shall now proceed to set forth the result of my inquiries.

The West India Docks.

The West India Docks are about a mile and a-half from the London Docks. The entire ground that they cover is 295 acres, so that they are nearly three times larger than the London Docks, and more than twelve times more extensive than those of St. Katherine's. Hence they are the most capacious of all the great warehousing establishments in the port of London. The export dock is about 870 yards, or very nearly half-a-mile in length by 135 yards in width; its area, therefore, is about 25 acres. The import dock is the same length as the export dock, and 166 yards wide. The south dock, which is appropriated both to import and export vessels, is 1,183 yards, or upwards of two-thirds of a mile long, with an entrance to the river at each end; both the docks, as well as that into the Blackwall basin, being forty feet wide, and large enough to admit ships of 1,200 tons burden. The warehouses for imported goods are on the four quays of the import dock. They are well contrived and of great extent, being calculated to contain 180,000 tons of merchandise; and there has been at one time on the quays, and in the sheds, vaults, and warehouses, colonial produce worth 20,000,000*l.* sterling. The East India Docks are likewise the property of the West India Dock Company, having been purchased by them of the East India Company at the time of the opening of the trade to India. The import dock here has an area of 18 acres, and the export dock about 9 acres. The depth of water in these docks is greater, and they can consequently accommodate ships of greater burden than any other establishment on the river. The capital of both establishments, or of the united company, amounts to upwards of 2,000,000 of money. The West India import dock can accommodate 300 ships, and the export dock 200 ships of 300 tons each; and the East India import dock 84 ships, and the export dock 40 ships, of 800 tons each. The number of ships that entered the West India Dock to load and unload last year was 3008, and the number that entered the East India Dock 298. I owe the above information, as well as that which follows, to the kindness of the secretary and superintendent of the docks in question. To the politeness and intelligence of the latter gentleman I am specially indebted. Indeed his readiness to afford me all the assistance that lay in his power, as well as his courtesy and gentlemanly demeanour, formed a marked contrast to that of the deputy-superintendent of the London Docks, the one appearing as anxious for the welfare and comfort of the labouring men as the other seemed indifferent to it.

The transition from the London to the West India Docks is of a very peculiar character. The labourers at the latter place seem to be more civilised. The scrambling and scuffling for the day's hire, which is the striking feature of the one establishment, is scarcely distinguishable at the other. It is true there is the same crowd of labourers in quest of a day's work, but the struggle to obtain it is neither so fierce nor so disorderly in its character. And yet, here the casual labourers are men from whom no character is demanded as well as there. The amount of wages for the summer months is the same as at the London Docks. Unlike the London Docks, however, no reduction is made at the East and West India Docks during the winter.

The labour is as precarious at one establishment as at the other. The greatest number of hands employed for any one day at the East and West India Docks in the course of last year was nearly 4000, and the smallest number about 1300. The lowest number of ships that entered the docks during any one week in the present year was 28, and the highest number 209, being a difference of 181 vessels, of an average burden of 300 tons each. The positive amount of variation, however, which occurred in the labour during the briskest and slackest weeks of last year was a difference of upwards of 2500 in the number of extra workmen employed, and of about 2000*l.* in the amount of wages paid for the six days' labour. I have been favoured with a return of the number of vessels that entered the East and West India Docks for each week in the present year, and

I subjoin a statement of the number arriving in each of the first fourteen of those weeks. In the 1st week of all there were 86, the 2d 47, the 3d 43, the 4th 48, the 5th 28, the 6th 49, the 7th 46, the 8th 37, the 9th 42, the 10th 47, the 11th 42, the 12th 131, the 13th 209, and the 14th 85. Hence it appears, that in the second week the number of ships coming into dock decreased nearly one-half; in the fifth week they were again diminished in a like proportion, while in the sixth week they were increased in a similar ratio; in the twelfth week they were more than three times what they were in the eleventh, in the thirteenth the number was half as much again as it was in the twelfth, and in the fourteenth it was down below half the number of the thirteenth, so that it is clear that the subsistence derived from dock labour must be of the most fickle and doubtful kind.

The St. Katherine's Dock.

Nor are the returns from St. Katherine's Dock of a more cheerful character. Here it should be observed that no labourer is employed without a previous recommendation; and, indeed, it is curious to notice the difference in the appearance of the men applying for work at this establishment. They not only have a more decent look, but seem to be better behaved than any other dock-labourers I have yet seen. The "ticket" system is here adopted—that is to say, the plan of allowing only such persons to labour within the docks as have been satisfactorily recommended to the company, and furnished with a ticket by them in return—this ticket system, says the statement which has been kindly drawn up expressly for me by the superintendent of the docks, may be worth notice, at a time when such efforts are making to improve the condition of the labourers. It gives an identity and *locus standi* to the men which casual labourers cannot otherwise possess, it connects them with the various grades of officers under whose eyes they labour, prevents favouritism, and leads to their qualifications being noted and recorded. It also holds before them a reward for activity, intelligence, and good conduct; because the vacancies in the list of preferable labourers, which occur during the year, are invariably filled in the succeeding January by selecting, upon strict inquiry, the best of the extra-ticket labourers, the vacancies among the permanent men being supplied in like manner from the list of preferable labourers, while from the permanent men are appointed the subordinate officers, as markers, samplers, &c.

Let us, however, before entering into a description of the class and number of labourers employed at St. Katherine's give a brief description of the docks themselves. The lofty walls, which constitute it in the language of the Custom-house a place of special security, enclose an area of 23 acres, of which 11 are water, capable of accommodating 120 ships, besides barges and other craft; cargoes are raised into the warehouses out of the hold of a ship, without the goods being deposited on the quay. The cargoes can be raised out of the ship's hold into the warehouses of St. Katherine's in one-fifth of the usual time. Before the existence of docks, a month or six weeks was taken up in discharging the cargo of an East-Indiaman of from 800 to 1200 tons burden, while 8 days were necessary in the summer and 14 in the winter to unload a ship of 350 tons. At St. Katherine's, however, the average time now occupied in discharging a ship of 250 tons is twelve hours, and one of 500 tons two or three days, the goods being placed at the same time in the warehouse: there have been occasions when even greater despatch has been used, and a cargo of 1100 casks of tallow, averaging from 9 to 10 cwt. each, has been discharged in seven hours. This would have been considered little short of a miracle on the legal quays less than fifty years ago. In 1841, about 1000 vessels and 10,000 lighters were accommodated at St. Katherine's Dock. The capital expended by the dock company exceeds 2,000,000 of money.

The business of this establishment is carried on by 35 officers, 105 clerks and apprentices, 135 markers, samplers, and foremen, 250 permanent labourers, 150 preferable ticket-labourers, proportioned to the amount of work to be done. The average number of labourers employed, permanent, preferable, and extras, is 1096; the highest number employed on any one day last year was 1713, and the lowest number 515, so that the extreme fluctuation in the labour appears to be very nearly 1200 hands. The lowest sum of money that was paid in 1848 for the day's work of the entire body of labourers employed was 64*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*, and the highest sum 214*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, being a difference of very nearly 150*l.* in one day, or 900*l.* in the course of the week. The average number of ships that enter the dock every week is 17, the highest number that entered in any one week last year was 36, and the lowest 5, being a difference of 31. Assuming these to have been of an average burden of 300 tons, and that every such vessel would require 100 labourers to discharge its cargo in three days, then 1500 extra hands ought to have been engaged to discharge the cargoes of the entire number in a week. This, it will be observed, is very nearly equal to the highest number of the labourers employed by the company in the year 1848.

The remaining docks are the Commercial Docks and timber ponds, the Grand Surrey Canal Dock at Rotherhithe, and the East Country Dock. The Commercial Docks occupy an area of about 49 acres, of which four-fifths are water. There is accommodation for 350 ships, and in the warehouses for 50,000 tons of merchandise. They are appropriated to vessels engaged in the European timber and corn

trades, and the surrounding warehouses are used chiefly as granaries—the timber remaining afloat in the dock until it is conveyed to the yard of the wholesale dealer and builder. The Surrey Dock is merely an entrance basin to a canal, and can accommodate 300 vessels. The East Country Dock, which adjoins the Commercial Docks on the South, is capable of receiving 28 timber-ships. It has an area of 6½ acres, and warehouse-room for 3700 tons.

In addition to these there is the Regent's Canal Dock, between Shadwell and Limehouse, and though it is a place for bonding timber and deals only, it nevertheless affords great accommodation to the trade of the port by withdrawing shipping from the river.

The number of labourers, casual and permanent, employed at these various establishments is so limited, that, taken altogether, the fluctuations occurring at their briskest and slackest periods may be reckoned as equal to that of St. Katherine's. Hence the account of the variation in the total number of hands employed, and the sum of money paid as wages to them, by the different dock companies, when the business is brisk or slack, may be stated as follows:—

At the London Dock the difference between the greatest and smallest number is .	2000 hands
At the East and West India Dock	2500 ,,
At the St. Katherine's Dock .	1200 ,,
At the remaining docks say . .	1300 ,,
Total number of dock labourers thrown out of employ by the prevalence of easterly winds	7000

	£.
The difference between the highest and lowest amount of wages paid at the London Dock is . .	1500
At the East and West India Dock .	1875
At the St. Katherine Dock . . .	900
At the remaining docks . . .	975
	£5250

From the above statement then it appears, that by the prevalence of an easterly wind no less than 7000 out of the aggregate number of persons living by dock labour may be deprived of their regular income, and the entire body may have as much as 5250*l.* a week abstracted from the amount of their collective earnings, at a period of active employment. But the number of individuals who depend upon the quantity of shipping entering the port of London for their daily subsistence is far beyond this amount. Indeed we are assured by a gentleman filling a high situation in St. Katherine's Dock, and who, from his sympathy with the labouring poor, has evidently given no slight attention to the subject, that taking into consideration the number of wharf-labourers, dock-labourers, lightermen, riggers and lumpers, shipwrights, caulkers, ships' carpenters, anchor-smiths, corn-porters, fruit and coal-meters, and indeed all the multifarious arts and callings connected with shipping, there are no less than from 2500 to 30,000 individuals who are thrown wholly out of employ by a long continuance of easterly winds. Estimating then the gains of this large body of individuals at 2*s.* 6*d.* per day, or 15*s.* per week, when fully employed, we shall find that the loss to those who depend upon the London shipping for their subsistence amounts to 20,000*l.* per week, and, considering that such winds are often known to prevail for a fortnight to three weeks at a time, it follows that the entire loss to this large class will amount to from 40,000*l.* to 60,000*l.* within a month,—an amount of privation to the labouring poor which it is positively awful to contemplate. Nor is this the only evil connected with an enduring easterly wind. Directly a change takes place a glut of vessels enters the metropolitan port, and labourers flock from all quarters; indeed they flock from every part where the workmen exist in a greater quantity than the work. From 500 to 800 vessels frequently arrive at one time in London after the duration of a contrary wind, and then such is the demand for workmen, and so great the press of business, owing to the rivalry among merchants, and the desire of each owner to have his cargo the first in the market, that a sufficient number of hands is scarcely to be found. Hundreds of extra labourers, who can find labour nowhere else, are thus led to seek work in the docks. But, to use the words of our informant, two or three weeks are sufficient to break the neck of an ordinary glut, and then the vast amount of extra hands that the excess of business has brought to the neighbourhood are thrown out of employment, and left to increase either the vagabondism of the neighbourhood or to swell the number of paupers and heighten the rates of the adjacent parishes.

Cheap Lodging-Houses.

I now come to the class of cheap lodging-houses usually frequented by the casual labourers at the docks. It will be remembered, perhaps, that I described one of these places, as well as the kind of characters to be found there. Since then I have directed my attention particularly to this subject; not because it came first in order according to the course of investigation I had marked out for myself, but because it presented so many peculiar features that I thought it better, even at the risk of being unmethodical, to avail myself of the channels of information opened to me rather than defer the matter to its proper place, and so lose the freshness of the impression it had made upon my mind.

On my first visit, the want and misery that I saw were such, that, in consulting with the gentleman who led me to the spot, it was arranged that a dinner should be given on the following Sunday to all those who were present on the evening of my first interview; and, accordingly, enough beef, potatoes, and materials for a suet-pudding, were sent in from the neighbouring market to feed them every one. I parted with my guide, arranging to be with him the next Sunday at half-past one. We met at the time appointed, and set out on our way to the cheap lodging-house. The streets were alive with sailors, and bonnetless and capless women. The Jews' shops and public-houses were all open, and parties of "jolly tars" reeled past us, singing and bawling on their way. Had it not been that here and there a stray shop was closed, it would have been impossible to have guessed it was Sunday. We dived down a narrow court, at the entrance of which lolled Irish labourers smoking short pipes. Across the court hung lines, from which dangled dirty-white clothes to dry; and as we walked on, ragged, unwashed, shoeless children scampered past us, chasing one another. At length we reached a large open yard. In the centre of it stood several empty costermongers' trucks and turned-up carts, with their shafts high in the air. At the bottom of these lay two young girls huddled together, asleep. Their bare heads told their mode of life, while it was evident, from their muddy Adelaide boots, that they had walked the streets all night. My companion tried to see if he knew them, but they slept too soundly to be roused by gentle means. We passed on, and a few paces further on there sat grouped on a door-step four women, of the same character as the last two. One had her head covered up in an old brown shawl, and was sleeping in the lap of the one next to her. The other two were eating walnuts; and a coarse-featured man in knee-breeches and "ankle-jacks" was stretched on the ground close beside them.

At length we reached the lodging-house. It was night when I had first visited the place, and all now was new to me. The entrance was through a pair of large green gates, which gave it somewhat the appearance of a stable-yard. Over the kitchen door there hung a clothes-line, on which were a wet shirt and a pair of ragged canvas trousers, brown with tar. Entering the kitchen, we found it so full of smoke that the sun's rays, which shot slanting down through a broken tile in the roof, looked like a shaft of light cut through the fog. The flue of the chimney stood out from the bare brick wall like a buttress, and was black all the way up with the smoke; the beams, which hung down from the roof, and ran from wall to wall, were of the same colour; and in the centre, to light the room, was a rude iron gas-pipe, such as are used at night when the streets are turned up. The floor was unboarded, and a wooden seat projected from the wall all round the room. In front of this was ranged a series of tables, on which lolled dozing men. A number of the inmates were grouped around the fire; some kneeling toasting herrings, of which the place smelt strongly; others, without shirts, seated on the ground close beside it for warmth; and others drying the ends of cigars they had picked up in the streets. As we entered the men rose, and never was so motley and so ragged an assemblage seen. Their hair was matted like flocks of wool, and their chins were grimy with their unshorn beards. Some were in dirty smock-frocks; others in old red plush waistcoats, with long sleeves. One was dressed in an old shooting-jacket, with large wooden buttons; a second in a blue flannel sailor's shirt; and a third, a mere boy, wore a long camlet coat reaching to his heels, and with the ends of the sleeves hanging over his hands. The features of the lodgers wore every kind of expression: one lad was positively handsome, and there was a frankness in his face and a straightforward look in his eye that strongly impressed me with a sense of his honesty, even although I was assured he was a confirmed pickpocket. The young thief who had brought back the 11½*d.* change out of the shilling that had been entrusted to him on the preceding evening, was far from prepossessing, now that I could see him better. His cheek-bones were high, while his hair, cut close on the top, with a valance of locks, as it were, left hanging in front, made me look upon him with no slight suspicion. On the form at the end of the kitchen was one whose squalor and wretchedness produced a feeling approaching to awe. His eyes were sunk deep in his head, his cheeks were drawn in, and his nostrils pinched with evident want, while his dark stubbly beard gave a grimness to his appearance that was almost demoniac; and yet there was a patience in his look that was almost pitiable. His clothes were black and shiny at every fold with grease, and his coarse shirt was so brown with long wearing, that it was only with close inspection you could see that it had once been a checked one: on his feet he had a pair of lady's side-laced boots, the toes of which had been cut off so that he might get them on. I never beheld so gaunt a picture of famine. To this day the figure of the man haunts me.

The dinner had been provided for thirty, but the news of the treat had spread, and there was a muster of fifty. We hardly knew how to act. It was, however, left to those whose names had been taken down as being present on the previous evening to say what should be done; and the answer from one and all was that the new-comers were to share the feast with them. The dinner was then half-portioned out in an adjoining outhouse into twenty-five platefuls—the entire stock of crockery belonging to the establishment numbering no more—and afterwards handed into the kitchen through a small window to each party, as his name was called out. As he hurried to the seat behind the bare table, he commenced tearing the meat asunder with his