

deception. On one occasion, by means of forged credentials, he obtained an appointment as curate in Northamptonshire, where he conducted himself for some time with a most sanctimonious air. Several marriages were celebrated by him, which were apparently satisfactorily performed. He obtained many articles of jewellery from firms in London, who were deceived by his appearance and position. He wrote several modes of handwriting, and had a plausible manner of insinuating himself into the good graces of his victims.

He died a very tragical death. Having been arrested for swindling he was taken to Northampton. On his arrival at the railway station there, he threw himself across the rails and was crushed to death by the train.

There is a mode of extracting money from the unwary, practised by a gang of swindlers by means of *mock auctions*. They dispose of watches, never intended to keep time,

and other spurious articles, and have confederates, or decoys, who pretend to bid for the goods at the auctions, and sometimes buy them at an under price; but they are by arrangement returned soon after, and again offered for sale.

We have been favoured with some of the foregoing particulars by the officials of Stubbs' Mercantile Offices; the courtesy of the secretary having also placed the register of that extensive establishment at our service.

Number of cases of fraud and conspiracy with intent to defraud in the Metropolitan districts for 1860	325
Ditto ditto in the City	51
	376

Value of property thereby abstracted in the Metropolitan district	£3,443
Ditto ditto in the City	2,429
	£5,872

BEGGARS AND CHEATS.

In primitive times beggars were recognised as a legitimate component part in the fabric of society. Socially, and apart from state government, there were, during the patriarchal period, three states of the community, and these were the landowners, their servants, and the dependants of both—beggars. There was no disgrace attached to the name of beggar at this time, for those who lived by charity were persons who were either too old to work or were incapacitated from work by bodily affliction. This being the condition of the beggars of the early ages, it was considered no less a sacred than a social duty to protect them and relieve their wants. Many illustrious names, both in sacred and profane history, are associated with systematic mendicancy, and the very name of "beggar" has derived a sort of classic dignity from this circumstance. Beggars are frequently mentioned with honour in the Old Testament; and in the New, one of the most touching incidents in our Lord's history has reference to "a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at the rich man's gate." Nor must it be forgotten that the father of poetry, the immortal Homer, was a beggar and blind, and went about singing his own verses to excite charity. The name of Belisarius is more closely associated with the begging exploits ascribed to him than with his great historical conquests. "Give a halfpenny to a poor man" was as familiar a phrase in Latin in the old world as it is to-day in the streets of London. It would be tedious to enumerate all the instances of honourable beggary which are celebrated in history, or even to glance at the most notable of them; it will be enough for the purpose we have in view if I direct attention to the aspects of beggary at a few marked periods of history.

It will be found that imposture in beggary has invariably been the offspring of a high state of civilization, and has generally had its origin in large towns. When mendicancy assumes this form it becomes a public nuisance, and imperatively calls for prohibitive laws. The beggar whose poverty is not real, but assumed, is no longer a beggar in the true sense of the word, but a cheat and an impostor, and as such he is naturally regarded, not as an object for compassion, but as an enemy to the state. In all times, however, the real beggar—

the poor wretch who has no means of gaining a livelihood by his labour, the afflicted outcast, the aged, the forsaken, and the weak—has invariably commanded the respect and excited the compassion of his more fortunate fellow-men. The traces of this consideration for beggars which we find in history are not a little remarkable. In the early Saxon times the relief of beggars was one of the most honourable duties of the mistress of the house. Our beautiful English word "lady" derives its origin from this practice. The mistress of a Saxon household gave away bread with her own hand to the poor, and thence she was called "*lef day*," or bread giver, which at a later period was rendered into *lady*. A well-known incident in the life of Alfred the Great shows how sacred a duty the giving of alms was regarded at that period. In early times beggary had even a romantic aspect. Poets celebrated the wanderings of beggars in so attractive a manner that great personages would sometimes envy the condition of the ragged mendicant and imitate his mode of life. James V. of Scotland was so enamoured of the life of the gaberlunzie man that he assumed his wallet and tattered garments, and wandered about among his subjects begging from door to door, and singing ballads for a supper and a night's lodging. The beggar's profession was held in respect at that time, for it had not yet become associated with imposture; and as the country beggars were also ballad-singers and storytellers, their visits were rather welcome than otherwise. It must also be taken into account that beggars were not numerous at this period.

It would appear that beggars first began to swarm and become troublesome and importunate shortly after the Reformation. The immediate cause of this was the abolition and spoliation of the monasteries and religious houses by Henry VIII. Whatever amount of evil they may have done, the monasteries did one good thing—they assisted the poor and provided for many persons who were unable to provide for themselves. When the monasteries were demolished and their revenues confiscated, these dependent persons were cast upon the world to seek bread where they could find it. As many of them were totally unaccustomed to labour, they had no resource but to beg. The result was that the coun-

try was soon overrun with beggars, many of whom exacted alms by violence and by threats. In the course of the next reign we hear of legislative enactments for the suppression of beggary. The first efforts in this direction wholly failed to abate the nuisance, and more stringent acts were passed. In the reign of Charles II. begging had become so profitable that a great many Irish came over to this country to pursue it as a trade.

The evil then became so intolerable that a royal proclamation was issued, specially directed to check the importation of beggars from Ireland. It is intitled "A Proclamation for the speedy rendering away of the Irishe Beggars out of this Kingdome into their owne Countrie and for the Suppressing and Ordering of Rogues and Vagabonds according to the Laws," which recites that: "Whereas this realme hath of late been pestered with great numbers of Irishe beggars who live here idly and dangerously, and are of ill example to the natives of this kingdome; and, whereas the multitude of English rogues and vagabonds doe much more abound than in former tymes—some wandering and begging under the colour of soldiers and mariners, others under the pretext of impotent persons, whereby they become a burthen to the good people of the land, all which happeneth by the neglect of the due execution of the lawes, formerly with great providence made, for relief of the true poore and indigent, and for the punishment of sturdy rogues and vagabonds; for the reforming therefore of soe great a mischief, and to prevent the many dangers which will ensue by the neglect thereof, the king, by the advice of his privy council and of his judges, commands that all the laws and statutes now in force for the punishment of rogues and vagabonds be duly putt in execution; and more particularly that all Irishe beggars, which now are in any part of this kingdome, wandering or begging, under what pretence soever, shall forthwith depart this realme and return to their owne countries, and there abide." And it is further directed that all such beggars "shall be conveyed from constable to constable to Bristoll, Mynhead, Barstable, Chester, Lyrepool, Milford-haven, and Workington, or such of them as shall be most convenient."

We see by this that the state of mendicancy in 1629, was very much what it is now, and that the artifices and dodges resorted to at that period were very similar to, and in many cases, exactly the same, as the more modern impostures which I shall have to expose in the succeeding pages.

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE POOR LAWS.

An Act passed in 1536 (27 Henry VIII. c. 25) is the first by which voluntary charity was converted into compulsory payment. It enacts that the head officers of every parish to which the impotent or able-bodied poor may resort under the provisions of the Act of 1531, shall receive and keep them, so that none shall be compelled to beg openly. The able-bodied were to be kept to constant labour, and every parish making default, was to forfeit 20s. a month. The money required for the support of the poor, was to be collected partly by the head officers of corporate towns and the churchwardens of parishes, and partly was to be derived from collections in the churches, and on various occasions where the clergy had opportunities for exhorting the people to charity. Almsgiving beyond the town or parish was prohibited on forfeiture of ten times the amount given. A "sturdy beggar" was to be whipped the first time he was detected in begging; to have his right ear cropped for the second offence; and if again guilty of begging was to be indicted for "wandering, loitering, and idleness," and if convicted was "to suffer execution of death as a felon and an enemy of the Commonwealth." The severity of this act prevented its execution, and it was repealed by 1 Edward VI. c. 3 (1547). Under this statute, every able-bodied person who should not apply himself to some honest labour, or offer to serve for even meat and drink, was to be taken for a vagabond, branded on the shoulder and adjudged a slave for two years to any one who should demand him, to be fed on bread and water and refuse meat and made to work by being beaten, chained, or otherwise treated. If he ran away during the two years, he was to be branded on the cheek and adjudged a slave for life, and if he ran away again he was to suffer death as a felon. If not demanded as a slave he was to be kept to hard labour on the highway in chains. The impotent poor were to be passed to their place of birth or settlement from the hands of one parish constable to those of another.

The statute was repealed three years afterwards and that of 1531 was revived. In 1551 an Act was passed which directed that a book should be kept in every parish containing the names of the householders and of the impotent poor; that collectors of alms should be appointed who should

"gently ask every man and woman what they of their charity will give weekly to the relief of the poor." If any one able to give should refuse, or discourage others from giving, the ministers and churchwardens were to exhort him, and failing of success, the bishop was to admonish him on the subject. This Act, and another made to enforce it, which was passed in 1555, were wholly ineffectual, and in 1563 it was re-enacted (5 Elizabeth c. 3), with the addition that any person able to contribute and refusing should be cited by the bishop to appear at the next sessions before the justices, where if he would not be persuaded to give, the justices were to tax him according to their discretion, and on his refusal he was to be committed to gaol until the sum taxed should be paid, with all arrears.

The next statute on the subject, which was passed in 1572 (14 Eliz. c. 5), shows how ineffectual the previous statutes had been. It enacted that all rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars, including in this description "all persons whole and mighty in body, able to labour, not having land or master, nor using any lawful merchandise, craft or mystery, and all common labourers, able in body, loitering and refusing to work for such reasonable wage as is commonly given," should "for the first offence be grievously whipped and burned through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch about;" for the second should be deemed felons; and for the third should suffer death as felons without benefit of clergy.

For the relief and sustentation of the aged and impotent poor, the justices of the peace within their several districts were "by their good discretion" to tax and assess all the inhabitants dwelling therein. Any one refusing to contribute was to be imprisoned until he should comply with the assessment. By the statutes 39 of Elizabeth, c. 3 and 4 (1598,) every able-bodied person refusing to work for the ordinary wages was to be "openly whipped until his body should be bloody, and forthwith sent from parish to parish, the most strait way to the parish where he was born, there to put himself to labour as a true subject ought to do."

The next Act, the 43 Elizabeth, c. 2, has been in operation from the time of its enactment in 1601 to the present day. A change in the mode of administration was, however, effected by the Poor Law Amendment Act (4 and 5 Wm. IV. c. 76) which was passed in 1834. During that long period many abuses crept into the administration

of the laws relating to the poor, so that in practice their operation impaired the character of the most numerous class, and was injurious to the whole country. In its original provisions the Act of Elizabeth directed the overseers of the poor in every parish to "take order for setting to work the children of all such parents as shall not be thought able to maintain their children," as well as all such persons as, having no means to maintain them, use no ordinary trade to get their living by. For this purpose they were empowered to raise weekly, or otherwise, by "taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar, and other; and of every occupier of lands, houses, tithes, mines, &c., such sums of money as they shall require for providing a sufficient stock of flax, hemp, wool and other ware, or stuff to set the poor on work; and also competent sums for relief of lame, blind, old and impotent persons, and for putting out children as apprentices." Power was given to the justices to send to the house of correction or common gaol all persons who would not work. The churchwardens and overseers were further empowered to build poor houses at the charge of the parish for the reception of the impotent poor only. The justices were further empowered to assess all persons of sufficient ability for the relief and maintenance of their children, grandchildren, and parents. The parish officers were also empowered to bind as apprentices any children who should be chargeable to the parish.

These simple provisions were in course of time greatly perverted, and many abuses were introduced into the administration of the poor law. One of the most mischievous practices was that which was established by the justices for the county of Berks in 1795, when, in order to meet the wants of the labouring population, caused by the high price of provisions, an allowance in proportion to the number of his family was made out of the parish fund to every labourer who applied for relief. This allowance fluctuated with the price of the gallon loaf of second flour, and the scale was so adjusted as to return to each family the sum which in given number of loaves would cost beyond the price in years of ordinary abundance. This plan was conceived in a spirit of benevolence; but the readiness with which it was adopted in all parts of England clearly shows the want of sound views on the subject. Under the allowance system the labourer received a part of his means of subsistence in the form of a parish gift, and as the fund out of which it was provided was raised from the contributions

of those who did not employ labourers, as well as of those who did, their employers being able in part to burthen others with the payment for their labour had a direct interest in perpetuating the system. Those who employed labourers looked upon the parish contribution as part of the fund out of which they were to be paid, and accordingly lowered their rate of wages. The labourers also looked on the fund as a source of wage. The consequence was, that the labourer looked to the parish, and as a matter of right, without any regard to his real wants, and he received the wages of his labour as only one and a secondary source of the means of subsistence. His character as a labourer became of less value, his value as a labourer being thus diminished, under the combined operation of these two causes.

In 1832 a commission was appointed by the Crown, under whose direction inquiries were made through England and Wales, and the actual condition of the labouring classes in every parish was ascertained, with the view of showing the evils of the existing practice and of suggesting some remedy.

The labour of this inquiry was great; but in a short time a report was presented by the commissioners, which explained the operation of the law as administered, with its effects upon different classes, and suggested remedial measures. This report was presented in 1834, and was followed by the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act (4 and 5 Wm. IV. c. 76) in August of the same year. This Act was again amended by the 7 and 8 Victoria, c. 101 (9th August 1844).

The chief provisions of this law are the appointment of a central board of three commissioners in London for the general superintendence and control of all bodies charged with the management of funds for the relief of the poor. There are nine assistant commissioners; each of whom has a district; the assistant commissioners are appointed by and removable by the commissioners; and the whole is under the direction of the President of the Poor Law Board. The administration of relief to the poor is under the control of the commissioners, who make rules and regulations for the purpose. They are empowered to order workhouses to be built, hired, altered, or enlarged, with the consent of a majority of a board of guardians. They have the power of uniting several parishes for the purposes of a more effective and economical administration of poor relief, but so that the actual charge in respect to its own poor is defrayed by each parish. These united

parishes or unions are managed by Boards of Guardians, annually elected by the rate-payers of the various parishes; but the masters of the workhouses and other paid officers are under the orders of the commissioners, and removable by them. The system of paying wages partly out of poor-rates is discontinued, and, except in ordinary cases, of which the commissioners are the judges, the relief is only to be given to able-bodied persons, or to their families, within the walls of the workhouse.

A glance at some of the clauses of the Act 7 and 8 Victoria will show the present condition of the machinery of the Poor Law, as regards the latest reforms.

Chapter 101, sect. 12, empowers the Poor Law Commissioners to prescribe the duties of the masters to whom poor children may be apprenticed, and the terms and conditions of the indentures of apprenticeship: and no poor children are in future to be apprenticed by the overseers of any parish included in any union, or subject to a Board of Guardians under the provisions of the 4 and 5 Wm. IV. c. 76; but it is declared to be lawful for the guardians of such union or parish to bind poor children apprentices. The 13th section abolishes so much of the 43 Eliz., c. 2, and of the 8 and 9 William III. c. 3, and of all other Acts, as compels any person to receive any poor child as an apprentice.

The 14th and following sections make some new regulations as to the number of votes of owners of property and rate-payers in the election of guardians and in other cases where the consent of the owners and rate-payers is required for any of the purposes of the 4 and 5 Wm. IV. c. 76.

The 18th section empowers the commissioners, having due regard to the relative population or circumstances of any parish, included in a union, to alter the number of guardians to be elected for such parish without such consent as is required by the Act of William.

This section also empowers the commissioners to divide parishes which have more than 20,000 inhabitants, according to the census then last published, into wards for the purpose of electing guardians, and to determine the number of guardians to be elected for each ward.

The 25th section provides that so long as any woman's husband is beyond the seas, or in custody of the law, or in confinement in a licensed house or asylum as a lunatic or idiot, all relief given to such a woman, or to her child or children, shall

be given in the same manner, and subject to the same conditions as if she was a widow; but the obligation or liability of the husband in respect of such relief continues as before.

The 26th section empowers the guardians of a parish or union to give relief to widows under certain conditions, who at the time of their husband's death were resident with them in some place other than the parish of their legal settlement, and not situated in any union in which such parish is comprised.

The 32nd section provides that the commissioners may combine parishes and unions in England for the audit of accounts. By the 40th section the commissioners may, subject to certain restrictions there mentioned, combine unions or parishes not in union, or such parishes and unions, into school districts for the management of any class or classes of infant poor not above the age of 16 years, being chargeable to any such parish or union, or who are deserted by their parents, or whose parent, or surviving parent, or guardians are consenting to the placing of such children in the school of such district.

By the 41st section the commissioners are empowered to declare parishes, or unions, or parishes and unions within the district of the metropolitan police, or the city of London, &c., to be combined into districts for the purpose of founding and managing asylums for the temporary relief and setting to work therein of destitute homeless poor who are not charged with any offence, and who may apply for relief, or become chargeable to the poor's rates within any such parish or union.

STATISTICS OF THE POOR LAWS.

The salaries and expenses of the commissioners for carrying into execution the Poor Law Acts in England and Ireland amount to about 56,000*l.*

The following statements will show the number of paupers, and the amounts expended in relieving their wants at various periods since the year 1783.

The average sum expended for the years 1783, 1784, and 1785, was		£1,912,241
1801	.	4,017,871
1811	.	6,656,105
1821	.	6,959,249
1831	.	6,798,888
1832	.	7,036,969
1833	.	6,790,799
1834	.	6,317,254
1835	.	5,526,418
1836	.	4,717,630

Years.	£.
1837	4,044,741
1838	4,123,604
1839	4,421,714
1840	4,576,965
1841	4,760,929
1842	4,911,498
1843	5,208,027
1844	4,976,093
1860	5,454,964

Number of indoor and outdoor paupers relieved during the following years:

Years.	Paupers.	Proportion per cent. to Population.
1803	1,040,716	12
1815	1,319,851	13
1832	1,429,356	9
1844	1,477,561	9.3
1860	844,633	4.3

In the last report of the Poor Law Board (that for 1860) it is stated that for twenty-two years preceding the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834 the average annual disbursement for the relief of the poor was 6,505,037*l.*, while for the subsequent 25 years it has only been 5,169,073*l.*, the supposed annual saving by the new law being 1,335,964*l.* The average annual cost of the new union-workhouses has been about 200,000*l.*, and the salaries of the paid Union-officers about 600,000*l.*

The strikes of 1860 told severely upon the returns. On July 1st, 1860, there were 1,751 able-bodied men receiving relief more than on the same day of the previous year. On new year's day of 1860 there were 40,972 more persons of all classes in receipt of relief than on the first day of the preceding year. There were 6,720 more able-bodied men in receipt of relief, and 7,026 more able-bodied women.

REPORT OF THE POOR LAW BOARD (1860).

The usual statistics of this report show that in the year 1860 the sum of 5,454,964*l.* was expended for the relief of the poor in England and Wales, being at the rate per head of the estimated population, of 5*s.* 6*d.* The net annual value of the rateable property at the present time (1860) is 71 millions.

The inefficiency of the Poor Law to meet the wants of the destitute in times of great and prevailing distress has been demonstrated over and over again, and at no period more pointedly and decisively than during the year 1860. On this subject we subjoin the remarks of a writer in the *Times* (Feb. 11, 1861). "It is an admitted and notorious fact, that after a fortnight's frost the police courts were besieged by thousands who professed to

be starving; the magistrates and officers of the court undertook the office of almoners in addition to their other laborious duties; the public poured in their contributions as they would for the victims of a terrible disaster; for a time we had in a dozen places a scene that rather took one back to the indiscriminate dole before the convent door, or the largess flung by the hand among the crowd at a royal progress than to an institution or custom of this sensible age. To some it naturally occurred that the Poor Law ought to have dispensed with this extraordinary exhibition; to others that no law could meet the emergency. . . . It was the saturnalia if not of mendicancy, at least of destitution. The police stood aside while beggars possessed the thoroughfares on the sole plea of an extraordinary visitation. There was a fortnight's frost, so it was allowable to one class to hold a midnight fair on the Serpentine, and to another to insist on being maintained at the expense of the public. Was all this right and proper? We had thought that the race of sturdy vagrants and valiant beggars was extinct, or at least that they dared no longer show themselves. But here they were in open day like the wretches which are said to emerge out of darkness on the day of a revolution. . . . When such is the fact, and when it is now admitted by all to have been not only exceptional, but highly exceptionable, we may leave others to find out the right shoulders on which the blame should be laid. For our part we hold that a Poor Law ought to be as proof against a long frost, or any other general visitation—and there are many more serious—as a ship ought to be against a storm, or an embankment against an inundation."

On the occasion here referred to the Poor Law gave relief to 23,000; but sent away 17,000 empty-handed, who would have starved but for the open-handed charity of the public, dispensed in the most liberal spirit by the metropolitan magistrates.

Mendicancy has always increased to an alarming extent after a war, and during the time of war, if it has been protracted. There is no doubt that the calamities of war reduce many respectable persons to want; but at the same time the circumstances which attend a period of commotion and trouble always afford opportunities to impostors. Mendicancy had reached a fearful pitch during the last great war with France; and in 1816, the year after the battle of Waterloo, the large towns were

so infested by beggars of every description that it was deemed necessary to appoint a select committee of the House of Commons to consider what could be done to abate the nuisance. The report of this committee furnishes some interesting particulars of the begging impostures of the time and of the gains of beggars.

STREET BEGGARS IN 1816.

It was clearly proved that a man with a dog got 30s. in one day.

Two houses in St. Giles's frequented by from 200 to 300 beggars. It was proved that each beggar made on an average from 3s. to 5s. a day. They had grand suppers at midnight, and drank and sang songs until day-break.

A negro beggar retired to the West Indies, with a fortune of 1,500*l.*

The value of 15s. 20s. and 30s. found upon ordinary street beggars. They get more by begging than they can by work; they get so much by begging that they never apply for parochial relief.

A manufacturer in Spitalfields stated that there were instances of his own people leaving profitable work for the purpose of begging.

It was proved that many beggars paid 50s. a week for their board.

Beggars stated that they go through 40 streets in a day, and that it is a poor street that does not yield 2*d.*

Beggars are furnished with children at houses in Whitechapel and Shoreditch; some who look like twins.

A woman with twins who never grew older sat for ten years at the corner of a street.

Children let out by the day, who carried to their parents 2s. 6*d.* a day as the price paid by the persons who hired them.

A little boy and a little girl earned 8s. a day. An instance is stated of an old woman who kept a night school for instructing children in the street language, and how to beg.

The number of beggars infesting London at this time (1816) was computed to be 16,000, of which 6,300 were Irish. We glean further from the report respecting them.

It appears by the evidence of the person who contracts for carrying vagrants in and through the county of Middlesex, that he has passed as many as 12,000 or 13,000 in a year; but no estimate can be formed from that, as many of them are passed several times in the course of the year. And it is proved that these people are in the course of eight or ten days in the same situation;

as they find no difficulty in escaping as soon as they are out of the hands of the Middlesex contractor.

A magistrate in the office at Whitechapel, thinks there is not one who is not worthless.

The rector of Saint Clement Danes describes them as living very well, especially if they are pretty well maimed, blind, or if they have children.

Beggars scarify their feet to make the blood come; share considerable sums of money, and get scandalously drunk, quarrel, and fight, and one teaches the other the mode of extorting money; they are the worst of characters, blasphemous and abusive; when they are detected as impostors in one parish they go into another.

They eat no broken victuals; but have ham, beef, &c.

Forty or fifty sleep in a house, and are locked in lest they should carry anything away, and are let out in the morning all at once.

Tear their clothes for an appearance of distress.

Beggars assemble in a morning, and agree what route each shall take. At some of the houses, the knives and forks chained to the tables, and other articles chained to the walls.

MENDICANT PENSIONERS.

Some who have pensions as soldiers or sailors were among those who apply by letters for charity; one sailor who had lost a leg is one of the most violent and desperate characters in the metropolis.

Among beggars of the very worst class there are about 30 Greenwich pensioners, who have instruments of music, and go about in parties.

A marine who complained that he had but 7*l.* a year pension, said he could make a day's work in an hour in any square in London.

A pensioner who had 18*l.* a year from Chelsea, when taken up for begging had bank-notes concealed in his waistcoat, and on many of that description frequently 8s. 10s. or 12s. are found, that they have got in a day.

Chelsea pensioners beg in all directions at periods between the receipts of their pensions.

A Chelsea pensioner who receives 1s. 6*d.* a day is one of the most notorious beggars who infest the town.

A Greenwich pensioner of 7*l.* a year, gets from 5s. to 10s. for writing begging letters.

BEGGING LETTER WRITERS IN 1816.

Some thousand applications by letters are made for charity to ladies, noblemen, and gentlemen in the metropolis; two thousand on an average were within the knowledge of one individual who was employed to make inquiries. Several persons subsist by writing letters: one woman profits by the practice, who receives a guinea a week as a legacy from a relation, and has laid out 200*l.* in the funds. Letters have been written by the same person in five or six different hands.

Persons who write begging letters are called twopenny-post beggars.

A man who keeps a school writes begging letters for 2*d.* each.

These extracts, culled here and there from a voluminous report, will suffice to give an idea of the state of mendicancy in the metropolis at the beginning of the century. The public were so shocked and startled by the systematic impostures that were brought to light that an effort was made to protect the charitable by means of an organized system of inquiry into the character, and condition of all persons who were found begging. The result of this effort was the establishment in 1818 of the now well-known

MENDICITY SOCIETY.

The object of this Society was to protect noblemen, gentlemen, and other persons accustomed to dispense large sums in charity from being imposed upon by cheats and pretenders, and at the same time to provide, on behalf of the public, a police system, whose sole and special function should be the suppression of mendicancy.

The plan of the Society is as follows:—The subscribers receive printed tickets from the Society, and these they give to beggars instead of money. The ticket refers the beggar to the Society's office, and there his case is enquired into. If he be a deserving person relief is afforded him from funds placed at the disposal of the Society by its subscribers. If he is found to be an impostor he is arrested and prosecuted at the instance of the Society. Governors of this Society may obtain tickets for distribution at any time. The annual payment of one guinea constitutes the donor a governor, and the payment of ten guineas at one time, or within one year, a governor for life. A system of inquiry into the merits of persons who are in the habit of BEGGING BY LETTER has been incorporated

with the Society's proceedings, and the following persons are entitled to refer such letters to the office for investigation, it being understood that the eventual grant of relief rests with the subscriber sending the case:—

- I. All contributors to the general funds of the Society to the amount of twenty guineas.
- II. All contributors to the general funds of the Society to the amount of ten guineas, and who also subscribe ONE GUINEA annually.
- III. All subscribers of two guineas and upwards per annum.

So successful have been the efforts of this Society in protecting the charitable from the depredations of begging-letter writers and other mendicants, that now almost every public man whose prominent position marks him out for their appeals, contributes to the Society, either by subscriptions or donation. The Queen herself is the Patron; the President is the Marquis of Westminster, and among the Vice-Presidents may be counted three dukes, three marquises, eight earls, one viscount, a bishop, and a long list of lords and members of parliament. Altogether the Society has about 2,400 subscribers, whose donations and subscriptions range from 100*l.* and 50*l.* to 2*l.* and 1*l.* The total amount of the Society's income for 1860 was 3,913*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*, of which 3,010*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* was derived from subscriptions and donations, the remainder being derived from legacies, interest on stock and the profits of the Society's works. The expenditure for the same year was 3,169*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.*, and the amount expended in the relief of mendicants, 906*l.* 9*s.*

The meals given in 1860 to persons who were found to be deserving were 42,192.

The unregistered cases (that is, those not thought to require a special investigation) were 4,224, and the registered cases 430.

The vagrants apprehended were 739; of whom 350 were convicted,

The following Table sets forth the whole of the cases that came under the notice of the Society in 1860.

Number of registered cases in 1860	430
Of which there appeared to belong—	
To parishes in London	151
Country	142
Ireland	82
Scotland	0
Wales	8
France	2
East Indies	7

West Indies	2
America	1
Italy	5
Africa	1
China	1
Switzerland	2
Germany	2
Poland	1
Unknown	7
	— 430

Alleged causes of distress.

Want of employment	395
Age and infirmity	1
Failure in business	1
Foreigners and others desirous of returning home	22
Sickness and accidents	2
Want of clothing	3
Loss of stock, tools, &c.	1
Loss of character	1
Loss of relations and friends by death, desertion, imprisonment, &c.	4
	— 430

The various cases were disposed of as follows:—

Referred to London parishes; most of whom were admitted into workhouses, or obtained relief through the interference of the Society, some being previously relieved with money, food, and clothing	15
Relieved with clothing and sent to their respective parishes	9
Provided with situations, clothing, tools, goods, or other means of effectually supporting themselves	8
New apprehended cases by the Society's constables during 1860: a large number of whom were committed by the magistrates as vagrants; others were referred to the Society, and sent to work, the men at the mill, and stone-breaking, and the women at oakum-picking; and several were assisted with the means of returning home	376
Proved on investigation to be undeserving	4
Employed at the mill and oakum picking (not apprehended cases)	1
Placed in hospitals and assisted with clothing	4
Relieved weekly, where distress appeared temporary, and clothes, blankets, shoes, &c. given	13
Total	430

The following Table exhibits a statement of the Society's proceedings from the first year of its formation to the year 1860:—

Years.	Cases registered.	Vagrants committed.	Meals given.
1818	3,284	385	16,827
1819	4,682	580	33,013
1820	4,546	559	46,407
1821	2,339	324	28,542

Years.	Cases registered.	Vagrants committed.	Meals given.
Brought ford.			
1822	2,235	287	22,232
1823	1,493	193	20,152
1824	1,441	195	25,396
1825	1,096	381	19,600
1826	833	300	22,972
1827	806	403	35,892
1828	1,284	786	21,066
1829	671	602	26,286
1830	848	—	105,488
1831	1,285	—	79,156
1832	1,040	—	73,315
1833	624	—	37,074
1834	1,226	652	30,513
1835	1,408	1,510	84,717
1836	946	1,004	68,134
1837	1,087	1,090	87,454
1838	1,041	873	155,348
1839	1,055	962	110,943
1840	706	752	113,502
1841	997	1,119	195,625
1842	1,233	1,306	128,914
1843	1,148	1,018	167,126
1844	1,184	937	174,229
1845	1,001	868	165,139
1846	980	778	148,569
1847	910	625	239,171
1848	1,161	979	148,661
1849	1,043	935	64,251
1850	787	570	94,106
1851	1,150	900	102,140
1852	658	607	67,985
1853	419	354	62,788
1854	332	326	52,212
1855	235	239	52,731
1856	325	293	49,806
1857	354	358	54,074
1858	329	298	43,836
1859	364	305	40,256
1860	430	350	42,192
	51,016	24,773	3,357,834

Total number of apprehended cases in 1860:—	
Committed	350
Discharged	389
	— 739
Non-registered cases during the year	4,224
Registered cases	430
	— 4,654

I will now give a few examples of the cases which ordinarily come under the notice of the Society.

A DESERVING CASE.

A. L. and her sister, the one a widow, 70, the other a single woman, 55, applied for relief under the following circumstances. They had for many years been supporting themselves by making children's leather-covered toy balls, at one time earning a comfortable living; but their means were reduced from time to time by the introduction of India-rubber and gutta-percha, until at last five pence

per dozen was all they could obtain for their labour; and it required both to apply themselves for many hours to earn that small amount; still, to avoid the workhouse, they toiled on, until the destruction of Messrs. Payne's toy warehouse in Holborn, which threw them entirely out of work, and reduced them to absolute want. It was thus they were found in the winter having been frequently without food, fire, or candle, nearly perishing with cold, and in fear of being turned into the streets for arrears of rent. Inquiry having been instituted as to their character, which was found to be exceedingly good, they were relieved for three months with money and food weekly, besides bedding and clothing being given to them from the Society's stores.

ANOTHER.

E. W., the applicant, a widow of a journeyman carpenter, who, in consequence of his protracted illness and want of employment, was at the time of his death destitute, and in her confinement at the time she was visited by the Society. She had three young children incapable of contributing to their own support, and the parish officers in consequence were relieving her with a trifle weekly; but she was in a very low state for want of nourishment. The referee expressed it as his opinion that she was a very deserving woman, and that on two or three occasions he had afforded her assistance, and had much pleasure in recommending her case. Assistance was in consequence given her for several weeks, for which she appeared very grateful.

AN IMPOSTOR.

J. C. This man, who has been seventeen times apprehended by the Society's constables, and as many more by the police, was taken into custody for begging. He is an old man, and his age usually excites the sympathy of the public; but he is a gross impostor, and for the last fifteen years has been about the streets, imposing upon the benevolent. He has been convicted of stealing books, newspapers, and on one occasion an inkstand from a coffee house. His appeals to the benevolent in the streets are very pertinacious, and persons frequently give him money for the purpose of getting rid of him. He had, when last taken into custody, 2*l.* 9*s.* 4*d.* secreted about his person, part in his stockings, which he stated had been given to him to enable him to leave the country, and a variety of what he represented to be original verses

was found in his possession and produced before the magistrate, to whom he appealed to sympathise with a poor author. "Pray, sir," said he, "look at my verses; you will find that they are such as would be written by a man of scholastic attainments; they breathe a sentiment of love and charity, and of generosity to the poor; they are of scientific interest, and fit for the perusal of royalty." His sentence to a month's imprisonment only evidently surprised him, for which he thanked the magistrate; but he continued in a suppressed tone of voice: "But, sir, what about my money?" On being informed that, on account of his age, it should be returned to him when his time of imprisonment expired, he indulged in a rhapsody of delight, but begged that his emotion might not be misconstrued. "It is not the love of money, sir," addressing the magistrate, "that moves me thus; it is a far higher feeling; I have an affectionate heart, sir,—it is gratitude."

ANOTHER IMPOSTOR.

E. M. C. This man applied for relief during the severity of the winter of 1860-1, representing himself as in much distress for want of employment; that he had a wife ill at home, confined to her bed, and having been for a long time out of work, his three children were wanting food. Work was accordingly given to him at the Society's mill, and he was supplied with food for the immediate wants of his family, pending inquiry into the truthfulness of his story. It was found that he was a single man, who, for deceptive purposes, had adopted the name of a woman with whom he was living, and who had separated from her husband but a short time previously, and was tutoring her children in all imaginable kinds of vice. It was also ascertained that the police had strict orders to watch the man's movements, for he was known as an associate of characters of the worst description. He was consequently discharged from the Society's works, with a caution against applying to the benevolent for their sympathy in the future.

The following is the case of a person who applied for charity by letter, whose case was found to be a deserving one:—

J. W. A middle-aged man of creditable appearance, who had for many years obtained a livelihood for himself and family (consisting of his wife and six children) as a clerk and salesman to a respectable firm, being thrown out of his situation

through his employer's embarrassed circumstances, became gradually reduced to destitution, and therefore made application for assistance to a subscriber to the Society. It appeared upon investigation that he had been most regular in his attention to his duties, strictly honest, industrious, and sober, and just at the time of the inquiry it fortunately happened that he procured another situation, but was hampered with trifling debts which he incurred while out of employment, which it was necessary to discharge, as well as procure suitable clothing. His character having proved satisfactory, the subscriber applied to directed a handsome donation to be appropriated to his assistance, whereby he was enabled to overcome his difficulties. He showed himself most grateful for the assistance.

I shall now, by way of contrast, give the case of two beggars by letter, who were found to be rank impostors:—

H. G. This man and his wife have been known to the Society for many years as two of the most persevering and impudent impostors that ever came under its cognizance. The man, although possessing considerable ability, and having a respectable situation as a clerk in a public institution, had become such an habitual drunkard as to be quite reckless as to what false representations he put forth to obtain charitable assistance; and finding himself detected in his various fabricated tales of distress, had the impudence to apply to a subscriber by letter, wherein he represented that his wife had died after several months' severe affliction, which upon inquiry turned out untrue, his wife being alive and well, and they were living together at the very time the letter was written. Notwithstanding he was thus foiled in his endeavours to impose, a few weeks afterwards the wife had the assurance to send a letter to another subscriber, craving assistance on account of the death of her husband, and in order to carry out the deception she dressed herself in widow's weeds. The gentleman applied to, however, having some misgivings as to her representations, fortunately forwarded her appeal to the Society, where it was ascertained that her husband was also alive and well.

A WELL-EDUCATED BEGGAR.

J. R. P. F. A man about 45 years of age, the son of a much respected clergyman in Lancashire, who had received a good classical education, and was capable of gaining an excellent livelihood, applied

to various persons for aid, in consequence, as he said, of being in great distress through want of a situation. He carefully selected those gentlemen who were well acquainted with, and respected, his father, some of whom, mistrusting his representations, forwarded the letters to the Mendicity Society for inquiry, which proved the applicant to be a most depraved character, who had been a source of great trouble to his parents for many years, they having provided him with situations (as teacher in various respectable establishments) from time to time, and also furnished him with means of clothing himself respectably; but on every occasion he remained in his employment but a very short time, before he gave way to his propensity to drink, and so disgraced himself that his employers were glad to get rid of him; whereupon he made away with his clothing to indulge his vicious propensity.

I will now proceed to give an account of the beggars of London, as they have come under my notice in the course of the present inquiry.

BEGGING-LETTER WRITERS.

Foremost among beggars, by right of pretension to blighted prospects and correct penmanship, stands the Begging-Letter Writer. He is the connecting link between mendicity and the observance of external respectability. He affects white cravats, soft hands, and filbert nails. He oils his hair, cleans his boots, and wears a portentous stick-up collar. The light of other days of gentility and comfort casts a halo of "deportment" over his well-brushed, white-seamed coat, his carefully darned black-cloth gloves, and pudgy gaiters. He invariably carries an umbrella, and wears a hat with an enormous brim. His once raven hair is turning grey, and his well-shaved whiskerless cheeks are blue as with gunpowder tattoo. He uses the plainest and most respectable of cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, and keeps his references as to character in the most irreproachable of shabby leather pocket-books. His mouth is heavy, his under-lip thick, sensual, and lowering, and his general expression of pious resignation contradicted by restless, bloodshot eyes, that flash from side to side, quick to perceive the approach of a compassionate-looking clergyman, a female devotee, or a keen-scented member of the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity.

Among the many varieties of mendacious beggars, there is none so detestable as this

hypocritical scoundrel, who, with an ostentatiously-submissive air, and false pretence of faded fortunes, tells his plausible tale of undeserved suffering, and extracts from the hearts and pockets of the superficially good-hearted their sympathy and coin. His calling is a special one, and requires study, perseverance, and some personal advantages. The begging-letter writer must write a good hand, speak grammatically, and have that shrewd perception of character peculiar to fortune-tellers, horoscopes, cheap-jacks, and pedlars. He "must read and write, and cast accounts;" have an intuitive knowledge of the "nobility and landed gentry;" be a keen physiognomist, and an adept at imitation of handwritings, old documents, quaint ancient orthography, and the like. He must possess an artistic eye for costume, an unflinching courage, and have tears and hysterics at immediate command.

His great stock-in-trade is his register. There he carefully notes down the names, addresses, and mental peculiarities of his victims, and the character and pretence under which he robbed them of their bounty. It would not do to tell the same person the same story *twice*, as once happened to an unusually audacious member of the fraternity, who had obtained money from an old lady for the purpose of burying his wife, for whose loss he, of course, expressed the deepest grief. Confident in the old lady's kindness of heart and weakness of memory, three months after his bereavement he again posted himself before the lady's door, and gave vent to violent emotion.

"Dear me!" thought the old lady, "there's that poor man who lost his wife some time ago." She opened the window, and, bidding the vagabond draw nearer, asked him what trouble he was in at present.

After repeated questioning the fellow gurgled out, "That the wife of his bosom, the mother of his children, had left him for that bourne from which no traveller returns, and that owing to a series of unprecedented and unexpected misfortunes he had not sufficient money to defray the funeral expenses, and—"

"Oh, nonsense!" interrupted the old lady. "You lost your wife a quarter of a year ago. You couldn't lose her twice; and as to marrying again, and losing again in that short time, it is quite impossible!"

I subjoin some extracts from a Register kept by a begging-letter writer, and who was detected and punished:—

Cheltenham.

May 14, 1842.

REV. JOHN FURBY.—Springwood Villa.—Low Church.—Fond of architecture—Dugdale's Monastica.—Son of architect—Lost his life in the "Charon," U.S. packet—£2, and suit of clothes—Got reference.

MRS. BRANXHOLME.—Clematis Cottage.—Widow—Through Rev. Furby, £3 and prayer-book.

Gloucester.

May 30

MRS. CAPTAIN DANIELS.—Street.—Widow—Son drowned off Cape, as purser of same ship, "The Thetis"—£5 and old sea-chest. N.B.: Vamosed next day—Captain returned from London—Gaff blown in county paper. Mem.: Not to visit neighbourhood for four years.

Lincoln.

June 19.

ANDREW TAGGART.—Street.—Gentleman—Great abolitionist of slave trade—As tradesman from U.S., who had lost his custom by aiding slope of fugitive female slave—By name Naomi Brown—£5. N.B.: To work him again, for he is good.

Grantham.

July 1.

CHARLES JAMES CAMPION.—Westby House.—Gentleman—Literary—Writes plays and novels—As distant relative of George Frederick Cooke, and burnt-out bookseller—£2 2s. N.B.: Gave me some of his own books to read—Such trash—Cadger in one—No more like cadger than I'm like Bobby Peel—Went to him again on 5th—Told him thought it wonderful, and the best thing out since Vicar of Wakefield—Gave me £1 more—Very good man—To be seen to for the future.

Huntingdon.

July 15.

MRS. SIDDIK.—Street.—Widow—Cranky—Baptist—As member of persuasion from persecution of worldly-minded relatives—£10—Gave her address in London—Good for a £5 every year—Recognized inspector—Leave to-night.

There are, of course, many varieties of the begging-letter writer; but although each and all of them have the same pretensions to former respectability, their mode of levying contributions is entirely different. There are but few who possess the versatility of their great master—Bampfylde Moore Carew; and it is usual for every member of the fraternity to chalk out for himself a particular "line" of imposition—a course of conduct that renders him perfect in the part he plays, makes his references and certificates continually available, and prevents him from "jostling" or coming into collision with others of his calling who might be "on the same lay as himself, and spoil his game!" Among the many specimens, one of the most prominent is the

DECAYED GENTLEMAN.

The conversation of this class of mendi-

cant is of former greatness, of acquaintance among the nobility and gentry of a particular county—always a distant one from the scene of operations—of hunting, races, balls, meets, appointments to the magistracy, lord-lieutenants, contested elections, and marriages in high life. The knowledge of the things of which he talks so fluently is gleaned from files of old county newspapers. When at fault, or to use his own phrase, "pounded," a ready wit, a deprecating shrug, and a few words, such as, "Perhaps I'm mistaken—I used to visit a good deal there, and was introduced to so many who have forgotten me now—my memory is failing, like everything else"—extricate him from his difficulty, and increase his capital of past prosperity and present poverty. The decayed gentleman is also a great authority on wines—by right of a famous sample—his father "laid down" in eighteen eleven, "the comet year you know," and is not a little severe upon his past extravagance. He relishes the retrospection of the heavy losses he endured at Newmarket, Doncaster, and Epsom in "forty-two and three," and is pathetic on the subject of the death of William Scott. The cause of his ruin he attributes usually to a suit in the Court of Chancery, or the "fatal and calamitous Encumbered Irish Estates Bill." He is a florid impostor, and has a jaunty sonorous way of using his clean, threadbare, silk pocket-handkerchief, that carries conviction even to the most sceptical.

It is not uncommon to find among these degraded mendicants one who has really been a gentleman, as far as birth and education go, but whose excesses and extravagances have reduced him to mendicity. Such cases are the most hopeless. Unmindful of decent pride, and that true gentility that rises superior to circumstance, and finds no soil upon the money earned by labour, the lying, drunken, sodden wretch considers work "beneath him;" upon the shifting quicksands of his own vices rears an edifice of vagabond vanity, and persuades himself that, by forfeiting his manhood, he vindicates his right to the character of gentleman.

The letters written by this class of beggar generally run as follows. My readers will, of course, understand that the names and places mentioned are the only portions of the epistles that are fictitious.

"Three Mermaids Inn, Pond Lane.
April —, 18 .

"SIR, OR MADAM,

"Although I have not the honour to

be personally acquainted with you, I have had the advantage of an introduction to a member of your family, Major Sherbrook, when with his regiment at Malta; and my present disadvantageous circumstances emboldens me to write to you, for the claims of affliction upon the heart of the compassionate are among the holiest of those kindred ties that bind man to his fellow-being.

"My father was a large landed proprietor at Peddlethorpe, —shire. I, his only son, had every advantage that birth and fortune could give me claim to: From an informality in the wording of my father's will, the dishonesty of an attorney, and the rapacity of some of my poor late father's distant relatives, the property was, at his death, thrown into Chancery, and for the last four years I have been reduced to—comparatively speaking—starvation.

"With the few relics of my former prosperity I have long since parted. My valued books, and, I am ashamed to own, my clothes, are gone. I am now in the last stage of destitution, and, I regret to say, in debt to the worthy landlord of the tavern from which I write this, to the amount of eight and sixpence. My object in coming to this part of the country was to see an old friend, whom I had hoped would have assisted me. We were on the same form together at Rugby—Mr. Joseph Thurwood of Copesthorpe. Alas! I find that he died three months ago.

"I most respectfully beg of you to grant me some trifling assistance. As in my days of prosperity I trust my heart was never deaf to the voice of entreaty, nor my purse closed to the wants of the necessitous; so dear sir, or madam, I hope that my request will not be considered by you as impertinent or intrusive.

"I have the honour to enclose you some testimonials as to my character and former station in society; and trusting that the Almighty Being may never visit you with that affliction which it has been His all-wise purpose to heap on me, I am

"Your most humble and

"Obliged servant,

"FREDERICK MAURICE STANHOPE,
Formerly of Stanhope House, —shire."

THE BROKEN-DOWN TRADESMAN

is a sort of retail dealer in the same description of article as the decayed gentleman. The unexpected breaking of fourteen of the most respectable banking-houses in New York, or the loss of the cargoes of two vessels in the late autumnal gales, or the suspension of payment of Haul, Strong, and

Chates, "joined and combined together with the present commercial crisis, has been the means of bringing him down to his present deplorable situation," as his letter runs. His references are mostly from churchwardens, bankers, and dissenting clergymen, and he carries about a fictitious set of books—day-book, ledger, and petty-cash-book, containing entries of debts of large amounts, and a dazzling display of the neatest and most immaculate of commercial cyphering. His conversation, like his correspondence, is a queer jumble of arithmetic and scripture. He has a wife whose appearance is in itself a small income. She folds the hardest-working-looking of hands across the cleanest of white aprons, and curtsies with the humility of a pew-opener. The clothes of the worthy couple are shabby, but their persons and linen are rigorously clean. Their cheeks shine with yellow soap, as if they were rasped and bee's-waxed every morning. The male impostor, when fleecing a victim, has a habit of washing his hands "with invisible soap and imperceptible water," as though he were waiting on a customer. The wedded pair—and, generally, they are really married—are of congenial dispositions and domestic turn of mind, and get drunk, and fight each other, or go half-price to the play according to their humour. It is usually jealousy that betrays them. The husband is unfaithful, and the wife "peaches;" through her agency the police are put upon the track, and the broken-down tradesman is committed. In prison he professes extreme penitence, and has a turn for scriptural quotation, that stands him in good stead.

On his release he takes to itinerant preaching, or political lecturing. What becomes of him after those last resources it is difficult to determine. The chances are that he again writes begging letters, but "on a different lay."

THE DISTRESSED SCHOLAR

is another variety of the same species, a connecting link between the self-glorification of the decayed gentleman and the humility of the broken-down tradesman. He is generally in want of money to pay his railway-fare, or coach-hire to the north of England, where he has a situation as usher to an academy—or he cannot seek for a situation for want of "those clothes which sad necessity has compelled him to part with for temporary convenience." His letters, written in the best small hand, with the finest of upstrokes and fattest of downstrokes, are after this fashion:

"Star Temperance Coffee House,
"Gravel Walk.

"SIR, or MADAM,

"I have the honour to lay my case before you, humbly entreating your kind consideration.

"I am a tutor, and was educated at St. —'s College, Cambridge. My last situation was with the Rev. Mr. Cross, Laburnum House, near Dorking. I profess English, Latin, Greek, mathematics, and the higher branches of arithmetic, and am well read in general literature, ancient and modern. 'Rudem esse omnino in nostris poetis est inertissimæ signitiæ signum.'

"I am at present under engagement to superintend the scholastic establishment of Mr. Tighthand of the classical and commercial academy —, Cumberland, but have not the means of defraying the expenses of my journey, nor of appearing with becoming decency before my new employer and my pupils.

"My wardrobe is all pledged for an amount incommensurate with its value, and I humbly and respectfully lay my case before you, and implore you for assistance, or even a temporary accommodation.

"I am aware that impostors, armed with specious stories, often impose on the kind-hearted and the credulous. 'Nervi atque artus est sapientiæ—non temere credere.' I have therefore the honour to forward you the enclosed testimonials from my former employers and others as to my character and capacity.

"That you may never be placed in such circumstances as to compel you to indite such an epistle as the one I am at present penning is my most fervent wish. Rely upon it, generous sir—or madam—that, should you afford me the means of gaining an honourable competence, you shall never have to repent your timely benevolence. If, however, I should be unsuccessful in my present application, I must endeavour to console myself with the words of the great poet. 'Ætas ipsa solatium omnibus affert,' or with the diviner precept: 'And this too shall pass away.'

"I have, sir—or madam—the honour to be

"Your humble and obedient servant,
"HORACE HUMM."

A gracefully flourished swan, with the date in German text on his left wing, terminates the letter.

THE KAGGS FAMILY.

This case of cleverly organized swindling fell beneath the writer's personal observation.

In a paved court, dignified with the name of a market, leading into one of the principal thoroughfares of London, dwelt a family whom, from fear of an action for libel which, should they ever read these lines, they would assuredly bring, I will call Kaggs. Mr. Kaggs, the head of the family, had commenced life in the service of a nobleman. He was a tall, portly man, with a short nose, broad truculent mouth, and a light, moist eye. His personal advantages and general conduct obtained him promotion, and raised him from the servants' hall to the pantry. When he was thirty years of age, he was butler in the family of a country gentleman, whose youngest daughter fell in love, ran away with, and—married him. The angry father closed his doors against them, and steeled his heart to the pathetic appeals addressed to him by every post. Mr. Kaggs, unable to obtain a character from his last place, found himself shut out from his former occupation. His wife gave promise of making an increase to the numbers of the family, and to use Mr. Kaggs's own pantry vernacular, "he was flyblown and frost-bitten every joint of him."

It was then that he first conceived the idea of making his wife's birth and parentage a source of present income and provision for old age. She was an excellent penwoman, and for some months had had great practice in the composition of begging letters to her father. Mr. Kaggs's appearance being martial and imposing, he collected what information he could find upon the subject, and passed himself off for a young Englishman of good family, who had been an officer in the Spanish army, and served "under Evans!" Mrs. Kaggs's knowledge of the county families stood them in good stead, and they begged themselves through England, Scotland, and Wales, and lived in a sort of vulgar luxury, at no cost but invention, falsehood, and a ream or so of paper.

It was some few years ago that I first made their acquaintance. Mrs. Kaggs had bloomed into a fine elderly woman, and Mr. Kaggs's nose and stomach had widened to that appearance of fatherly responsibility and parochial importance that was most to be desired. The wife had sunk to the husband's level, and had brought up her children to tread in the same path. Their family, though not numerous, was a blessing to them, for each child, some way or other, contrived to bring in money. It was their parents' pride that they had given their off-spring a liberal education. As soon as they were of an age capable of

receiving instruction, they were placed at a respectable boarding-school, and, although they only stayed in it one half-year, they went to another establishment for the next half-year, and so managed to pick up a good miscellaneous education, and at the same time save their parents the cost of board and lodging.

James Julian Kaggs, the eldest and only son, was in Australia, "doing well," as his mamma would often say—though in what particular business or profession was a subject on which she preserved a discreet silence. As I never saw the young man in question, I am unable to furnish any information respecting him.

Catherine Kaggs, the eldest daughter, was an ugly and vulgar girl, on whom a genteel education and her mother's example of elegance and refinement had been thrown away. Kitty was a sort of Cinderella in the family, and being possessed of neither tact nor manner to levy contributions on the charitable, was sentenced to an out-door employment, for which she was well fitted. She sold flowers in the thoroughfare, near the market.

The second daughter, Betsey, was the pride of her father and mother, and the mainstay of the family. Tall, thin, and elegant, interesting rather than pretty, her pale face and subdued manners, her long eyelashes, soft voice, and fine hands, were the very requisites for the personation of beggared gentility and dilapidated aristocracy. Mrs. Kaggs often said, "That poor Kitty was her father's girl, a Kaggs all over—but that Bessie was a Thorncliffe (her own maiden name) and a lady every inch!"

The other children were a boy and girl of five and three years old, who called Mrs. Kaggs "Mamma," but who appeared much too young to belong to that lady in any relation but that of grand-children. Kitty, the flower girl, was passionately fond of them, and "Bessie" patronized them in her meek, maidenly way, and called them her dear brother and sister.

In the height of the season Miss Bessie Kaggs, attired in shabby black silk, dark shawl, and plain bonnet, would sally forth to the most aristocratic and fashionable squares, attended by her father in a white neck-cloth, carrying in one hand a small and fragile basket, and in the other a heavy and respectable umbrella. Arrived at the mansion of the intended victim, Miss Bessie would give a pretentious knock, and relieve her father of the burthen of the fragile basket. As the door opened, she would desire her parent, who was supposed to be a faithful retainer, to wait, and Mr. Kaggs

would touch his hat respectfully and retire meekly to the corner of the square, and watch the placards in the public-house in the next street.

"Is Lady — within?" Miss Betsey would inquire of the servant.

If the porter replied that his lady was out, or that she could not receive visitors, except by appointment, Miss Betsey would boldly demand pen, ink, and paper, and sit down and write, in a delicate, lady's hand, to the following effect:—

"Miss Thirlbrook presents her compliments to the Countess of —, and most respectfully requests the honour of enrolling the Countess's name among the list of ladies who are kindly aiding her in disposing of a few necessaries for the toilette.

"Miss Thirlbrook is reduced to this extreme measure from the sad requirements of her infirm father, formerly an officer in his Majesty's —d Regiment, who, from a position of comfort and affluence, is now compelled to seek aid from the charitable, and to rely on the feeble exertions of his daughter: a confirmed cripple and valetudinarian, he has no other resource.

"The well known charity of the Countess of — has induced Miss Thirlbrook to make this intrusion on her time. Miss T. will do herself the honour of waiting upon her ladyship on Thursday, when she earnestly entreats the favour of an interview, or an inspection of the few articles she has to dispose of."

Monday.

This carefully concocted letter—so different from the usual appeals—containing no references to other persons as to character or antecedents, generally had its effect, and in a few days Miss Betsey would find herself tête-à-tête with the Countess —.

On entering the room she would make a profound curtsy, and, after thanking her ladyship for the honour, would open the fragile basket, which contained a few bottles of scent, some fancy soaps, ornamental envelopes, and perforated note-papers.

"Sit down, Miss Thirlbrook," the Countess would open the conversation. "I see the articles. Your note, I think, mentioned something of your being in less fortunate —"

Miss Betsey would lower her eyelashes and bend her head—not too deferentially, but as if bowing to circumstances for her father—her dear father's sake—for this was implied by her admirably concealed histrionic capability.

The lady would then suggest that she had a great many claims upon her con-

sideration, and would delicately inquire into the pedigree and circumstances of Lieutenant Thirlbrook, formerly of his Majesty's—d Regiment.

Miss Betsey's replies were neither too ready nor too glib. She suffered herself to be drawn out, but did not advance a statement, and so established in her patroness's mind the idea that she had to deal with a very superior person. The sum of the story of this interesting scion of a fallen house was, that her father was an old Peninsular officer—as would be seen by a reference to the Army List (Miss Betsey had found the name in an old list); that he had left the service during the peace in 1814; that a ruinous lawsuit, arising from railway speculations, and an absconding agent, had reduced them to—to their present position—and that six years ago, an old wound—received at Barossa—had broken out, and laid her father helpless on a sick bed. "I know that these articles," Betsey would conclude, pointing to the fancy soaps and stationery, "are not such perhaps as your ladyship is accustomed to; but if you would kindly aid me by purchasing some of them—if ever so few—you would materially assist us; and I hope that—that we should not prove—either undeserving or ungrateful."

When, as sometimes happened, ladies paid a visit to Lieut. Thirlbrook, everything was prepared for their reception with a dramatic regard for propriety. The garret was made as clean and as uncomfortable as possible. Mr. Kaggs was put to bed, and the purpled pinkness of his complexion toned down with violet powder and cosmetics. A white handkerchief, with the Thirlbrook crest in a corner, was carelessly dropped upon the coverlid. A few physic bottles, an old United Service paper, and a ponderous Bible lay upon a ricketty round table beside him. Mrs. Kaggs was propped up with pillows in an arm-chair near the fireplace, and desired to look rheumatic and resigned. Kitty was sent out of the way; and the two children were dressed up in shabby black, and promised plums if they would keep quiet. Miss Betsey herself, in grey stuff and an apron, meek, mild, and matronly beyond her years, glided about softly, like a Sister of Mercy connected with the family.

My readers must understand that Mr. Kaggs was the sole tenant of the house he lived in, though he pretended that he only occupied the garrets as a lodger.

During the stay of the fashionable Samaritans Lieut. Thirlbrook—who had re-

ceived a wound in his leg at Barossa, under the Duke—would say but little, but now and then his mouth would twitch as with suppressed pain. The visitors were generally much moved at the distressing scene. The gallant veteran—the helpless old lady—the sad and silent children—and the ministering angel of a daughter, were an impressive spectacle. The ladies would promise to exert themselves among their friends, and do all in their power to relieve them.

"Miss Thirlbrook," they would ask, as Miss Betsey attended them to the street-door, "those dear children are not your brother and sister, are they?"

Betsey would suppress a sigh, and say, "They are the son and daughter of my poor brother, who was a surgeon in the Navy—they are orphans. My brother died on the Gold Coast, and his poor wife soon followed him. She was delicate, and could not bear up against the shock. The poor things have only us to look to, and we do for them what little lies in our power."

This last stroke was a climax. "She never mentioned them before!" thought the ladies. "What delicacy! What high feeling! These are not common beggars, who make an exaggerated statement of their griefs."

"Miss Thirlbrook, I am sure you will pardon me for making the offer; but those dear children upstairs do not look strong. I hope you will not be offended by my offering to send them a luncheon now and then—a few delicacies—nourishing things—to do them good."

Miss Betsey would curtsy, lower her eyelids, and say, softly, "They are not strong."

"I'll send my servant as soon as I get home. Pray use this trifle for the present," (the lady would take out her purse,) "and good morning, Miss Thirlbrook. I must shake hands with you. I consider myself fortunate in having made your acquaintance."

Betsey's eyes would fill with tears, and as she held the door open, the expression of her face would plainly say: "Not only for myself, oh dear and charitable ladies, but for my father—my poor father—who was wounded, at Barossa, in the leg—do I thank you from the depths of a profoundly grateful heart."

When the basket arrived, Miss Betsey would sit down with her worthy parents and enjoy whatever poultry or meat had not been touched; but anything that had been cut, anything "second-hand," that dainty and haughty young lady would

instruct her sister Kitty to give to the poor beggars.

This system of swindling could not, of course, last many years, and when the west end of London became too hot to hold them, the indefatigable Kaggses put an advertisement into the *Times* and *Morning Post*, addressed to the charitable and humane, saying that "a poor, but respectable family, required a small sum to enable them to make up the amount of their passage to Australia, and that they could give the highest references as to character."

The old certificates were hawked about, and for more than two years they drove a roaring trade in money, outfits, and necessaries for a voyage. Mr. Kaggs, too, made a fortunate hit. He purchased an old piano, and raffled it at five shillings a head. Each of his own family took a chance. At the first raffle Miss Betsey won it, at the second, Miss Kitty, on the third, Mr. Kaggs, on the fourth, his faithful partner, and on the fifth and last time, a particular friend of Miss Kitty's, a young lady in the green-grocery line. This invaluable piece of furniture was eventually disposed of by private contract to a dealer in Barret's Court, Oxford Street, and, a few days after, the Kaggs family really sailed for Melbourne, and I have never since heard of them.

Among the begging-letter fraternity there are not a few persons who affect to be literary men. They have at one time or another been able to publish a pamphlet, a poem, or a song—generally a patriotic one, and copies of these works—they always call them "works"—they constantly carry about with them to be ready for any customer who may turn up. I have known a notable member of this class of beggars for some years. He was introduced to me as a literary man by an innocent friend who really believed in his talent. He greeted me as a brother craftsman, and immediately took from the breast-pocket of his thread-bare surtout a copy of one of his works. "Allow me," he said, "to present you with my latest work; it is dedicated, you will perceive, to the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby—here is a letter from his lordship complimenting me in the most handsome terms;" and before I could look into the book, the author produced from a well-worn black pocket-book a dirty letter distinguished by a large red seal. Sure enough it was a genuine letter beginning "The Earl of Derby presents his compliments," and going on to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of Mr. Driver's work.

Mr. Driver—I will call my author by that name—produced a great many other letters, all from persons of distinction, and the polite terms in which they were expressed astonished me not a little. I soon, however, discovered the key to all this condescension. The work was a political one, glorifying the Conservative party, and abounding with all sorts of old-fashioned Tory sentiments. The letters Mr. Driver showed me were of course all from Tories. The "work" was quite a curiosity. It was called a political novel. It had for its motto, "Pro Rege, Lege, Aris et Focis," and the dedication to the Right Honourable the Earl of Derby was displayed over a whole page in epitaph fashion. At the close of our interview Mr. Driver pointed out to me that the price of the work was two shillings. Understanding the hint, I gave him that amount, when he called for pen and ink, and wrote on the fly leaf of the work, "To ———, Esq., with the sincere regards of the author.—J. Fitzharding Driver." On looking over the book—it was a mere paper-covered pamphlet of some hundred pages—I found that the story was not completed. I mentioned this to Mr. Driver the next time I met him, and he explained that he meant to go to press—that was a favourite expression of his—to go to press with the second volume shortly. Ten years, however, have elapsed since then, and Mr. Driver has not yet gone to press with his second volume. The last time I met him he offered me the original volume as his "last new work," which he presumed I had never seen. He also informed me that he was about to publish a patriotic song in honour of the Queen. Would I subscribe for a copy—only three-and-sixpence—and he would leave it for me? Mr. Driver had forgotten that I had subscribed for this very song eight years previously. He showed me the selfsame MS. of the new national anthem, which I had perused so long ago. The paper had become as soft and limp and dingy as a Scotch one-pound note, but it had been worth a good many one-pound notes to Mr. Fitzharding Driver. Mr. Driver has lived upon this as yet unpublished song, and that unfinished political novel, for ten years and more. I have seen him often enough to know exactly his *modus operandi*. Though practically a beggar Mr. Driver is no great rogue. Were you to dress him well, he might pass for a nobleman. As it is, in his shabby genteel clothes he looks a broken-down swell. And so in fact he is. In his young days he had plenty of money, and went the pace among the young bloods

of Bond Street. Mr. Driver's young days were the days of the Regent. He drove a dashing phaeton-and-four then, and lounged and gambled, and lived the life of a man about town. He tells you all that with great pride, and also how he came to grief, though this part of the story is not so clear. There is no doubt that he had considerable acquaintance among great people in his prosperous days. He lives now upon his works, and the public-house parlours of the purlieus of the west-end serve him as publishing houses. He is a great political disputant, and his company is not unwelcome in those quarters. He enters, takes his seat, drinks his glass, joins in the conversation, and, as he says himself, shows that he is a man of parts. In this way he makes friends among the tradesmen who visit these resorts. They soon find out that he is poor, and an author, and moved both to pity and admiration, each member of the company purchases a copy of that unfinished political novel, or subscribes for that new patriotic song, which I expect will yet be in the womb of the press when the crack of doom comes. I think Mr. Driver has pretty well used up all the quiet parlours of W. district by this time. Not long ago I had a letter from him enclosing a prospectus of a new work to be entitled "Whiggery, or the Decline of England," and soliciting a subscription to enable him to go to press with the first edition. I have no doubt that every conservative member of both houses of Parliament has had a copy of that prospectus. Mr. Fitzharding Driver will call at their houses for an answer, and some entirely out of easy charity, and others from a party feeling of delight at the prospect of the Whigs being abused in a book even by this poor beggar, will send him down half-crowns, and enable the poor wretch to eat and drink for a few months longer. On more than one occasion while I have known him, Mr. Driver has been on the point of "being well off again," to use his own expression. His behaviour under the prospect was characteristic of the man, his antecedents, and his mode of life. He touched up his seedy clothes, had some cotton-velvet facings put to his threadbare surtout, revived his hat, mounted a pair of shabby patent-leather boots, provided himself with a penny cane, adorned with an old silk tassel, and appeared each day with a flower in his button-hole. In addition to these he had sewn into the breast of his surtout a bit of parti-coloured ribbon to look like a decoration. In this guise he came up to me at the Crystal

Palace one day, and appeared to be in great glee. His ogling and mysterious manner puzzled me. Judge of my astonishment when this hoary, old, tottering, toothless beggar informed me, with many self-satisfied chuckles, that a rich widow, "a fine dashing woman, sir," had fallen in love with him, and was going to marry him. The marriage did not come off, the pile is worn away from the velvet facings, the patent-leather boots have become mere shapeless flaps of leather, the old broad-brimmed hat is past the power of reviver, and the Bond Street buck of the days of the Regent now wanders from public-house to public-house selling lucifer-matches. He still however carries with him a copy of his "work," the limp and worn MS. of his anthem, and the prospectus of "Whiggery, or the Decline of England." These and the letters from distinguished personages stand him in better stead than the lucifer-matches, when he lights upon persons of congenial sympathies.

ADVERTISING BEGGING-LETTER WRITERS.

Among many begging-letter writers who appealed to sentiment, the most notorious and successful was a man of the name of Thomas Stone, alias Stanley, alias Newton. He had been in early life transported for forgery, and afterwards was tried for perjury; and when his ordinary methods of raising money had been detected and exposed, he resorted to the ingenious expedient of sending an advertisement to the *Times*, of which the following is a copy:—

"To the Charitable and Affluent.

"At the eleventh hour a young and most unfortunate lady is driven by great distress to solicit from those charitable and humane persons who ever derive pleasure from benevolent acts, some little pecuniary assistance. The advertiser's condition is almost hopeless, being, alas! friendless, and reduced to the last extremity. The smallest aid would be most thankfully acknowledged, and the fullest explanation given. Direct Miss T. C. M., Post-office, Great Randolph St., Camden New Town."

This touching appeal was read by a philanthropic gentleman, who sent the advertiser 5*l.*, and afterwards 1*l.* more, to which he received a reply in the following words:—

"SIR,—I again offer my gratitude for your charitable kindness. I am quite unable to speak the promptings of my heart for your great goodness to me, an entire stranger, but you may believe me, sir, I am very sincerely thankful. You will, I am sure, be

happy to hear I have paid the few trifling demands upon me, and also obtained sufficient of my wearing apparel to make a decent appearance; but it has swallowed up the whole of your generous bounty, or I should this day have moved to the Hampstead Road, where a far more comfortable lodging has been offered me, and where, sir, if you would condescend to call I would cheerfully and with pleasure relate my circumstances in connexion with my past history, and I do hope you might consider me worthy of your further notice. But it is my earnest desire to support myself and my dearest child by my own industry. As I mentioned before, I have youth and health, and have received a good education, but alas! I fear I shall have a great difficulty in obtaining employment such as I desire, for I have fallen! I am a mother, and my dear poor boy is the child of sin. But I was deceived—cruelly deceived by a base and heartless villain. A licence was purchased for our marriage; I believed all; my heart knew no guile; the deceptions of the world I had scarcely ever heard of; but too soon I found myself destroyed and lost, the best affections of my heart trampled upon, and myself infamous and disgraced. But I did not continue to live in sin. Oh no! I despised and loathed the villain who so deceived me. Neither have I received, nor would I, one shilling from him. I think I stated in my first letter I am the daughter of a deceased merchant; such is the case; and had I some friends to interest themselves for me, I do think it would be found I am entitled to some property; however, it would be first necessary to explain personally every circumstance, and to you, sir, I would unreservedly explain all. And oh! I do earnestly hope you would, after hearing my sad tale, think there was some little palliation of my guilt.

"In answer to the advertisement I had inserted, I received many offers of assistance, but they contained overtures of such a nature that I could not allow myself to reply to any of them. You, sir, have been my best friend, and may God bless you for your sympathy and kindness. I am very desirous to remove, but cannot do so without a little money in my pocket. Your charity has enabled me to provide all I required, and paid that which I owed, which has been a great relief to my mind. I hope and trust that you will not think me covetous or encroaching upon your goodness, in asking you to assist me with a small sum further, for the purpose named. Should you, however, decline to do so, be-

lieve me, I should be equally grateful; and it is most painful and repugnant to my feelings to ask, but I know not to whom else to apply. Entreating your early reply, however it may result, and with every good wish, and the sincerest and warmest acknowledgments of my heart, believe, sir, always your most thankful and humble servant,

"FRANCES THORPE.
"Please direct T. C. M., Post-office, Crown Street, Gray's Inn Road."

With the same sort of tale, varying the signature to Fanny Lyons, Mary Whitmore, and Fanny Hamilton, &c., Mr. Stone continued to victimize the public, until the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity laid him by the heels. He was committed for trial at Clerkenwell Sessions, and sentenced to transportation for seven years.

I must content myself with these few specimens of the begging-letter impostors; it would be impossible to describe every variety. Sometimes they are printers, whose premises have been destroyed by fire; at others, young women who have been ruined by noblemen and are anxious to retrieve themselves; or widows of naval officers who have perished in action or by sickness. There was a long run upon "aged clergymen, whose sands of life were fast running out," but the fraud became so common that it was soon "blown."

The greatest blow that was ever struck at this species of imposition was the establishment of the Begging-Letter Department by the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity. In the very first case they investigated they found the writer—who had penned a most touching letter to a well-known nobleman—crouching in a fireless garret in one of the worst and lowest neighbourhoods of London. This man was discovered to be the owner and occupier of a handsomely-furnished house in another part of the town, where his wife and family lived in luxury. The following is a specimen of a most artful begging letter from America.

*Ellicot's Mills, Howard Co., Maryland,
United States,*

June 6, 1859.

"MY DEAREST FRIEND,

"Why—why have you not written, and sent me the usual remittances? Your silence has caused me the greatest uneasiness. Poor dear Frederick is dying and we are in the extremest want. The period to hear from you has past some time, and no letter. It is very strange! What can it mean?"

"In a short time your poor suffering son will be at rest. I shall then trouble you no more; but—oh! I beseech you, do not permit your poor son to die in want. I have expended my last shilling to procure him those little necessaries he must and shall have. Little did I think when, long, long years ago, I deserted all, that you might be free and happy, that you would fail me in this terrible hour of affliction—but you have not—I know you have not. You must have sent, and the letter miscarried. Your poor dying son sends his fondest love. Poor dear fellow!—he has never known a father's care; still, from a child, he has prayed for, revered, and loved you—he is now going to his Father in heaven, and, when he is gone my widowed heart will break. When I look back upon the long past, although broken-hearted and crushed to the earth, yet I cannot tutor my heart to regret it, for I dearly loved you. Yes, and proved it, dearest friend, by forsaking and fleeing with my poor fatherless boy to this strange and distant land, that you might be free and happy with those so worthy of you; and, believe me when I say, that your happiness has been my constant prayer. In consequence of poor dear Frederick's sickness we are in the greatest distress and want. I have been compelled to forego all exertion, and attend solely upon him; therefore, do, I pray you, send me, without an instant's delay, a 10*l.* note. I must have it, or I shall go mad. Your poor suffering boy must not die in misery and want. Send the money by return mail, and send a Bank of England note, for I am now miles away from where I could get a draught cashed. I came here for the benefit of poor dear Frederick, but I fear it has done him no good. We are now among strangers, and in the most abject distress, and unless you send soon, your afflicted unoffending boy will starve to death. I can no longer bear up against poverty, sickness, and your unkindness; but you must have sent; your good, kind heart would not permit you to let us die in want. God bless you, and keep you and yours. May you be supremely happy! Bless you! In mercy send soon, for we are in extremest want.

"Remaining faithfully,
"Your dearest friend,
"KATE STANLEY.

"Pay the postage of your letter to me, or I shall not be able to obtain it, for I am selling everything to live."

The above affecting letter was received by the widow of a London merchant six

months after his death. The affair was investigated and proved to be an imposture. The moral character of Mr. — had been irreproachable. American begging-letter writers read the obituaries in English newspapers and ply their trade, while the loss of the bereaved relatives of the man whose memory they malign is recent.

ASHAMED BEGGARS.

By the above title I mean those tall, lantern-jawed men, in seedy well-brushed clothes, who, with a ticket on their breasts, on which a short but piteous tale is written in the most respectable of large-hand, and with a few boxes of lucifer-matches in their hands, make no appeal by word of mouth, but invoke the charity of passers-by by meek glances and imploring looks—fellows who, having no talent for "patter," are gifted with great powers of facial pathos, and make expression of feature stand in lieu of vocal supplication. For some years I have watched a specimen of this class, who has a regular "beat" at the west end of London. He is a tall man, with thin legs and arms, and a slightly-protuberant stomach. His "costume" (I use the word advisedly, for he is really a great actor of pantomime,) consists of an old black dress-coat, carefully buttoned, but left sufficiently open at the top to show a spotlessly white shirt, and at the bottom, to exhibit an old grey waistcoat; and a snowy apron, which he wears after the fashion of a Freemason, forgetting that real tradesmen are never seen in their aprons except behind the counter. A pair of tight, dark, shabby trousers, black gaiters without an absent button, and heavy shoes of the severest thickness, cover his nether man. Round his neck is a red worsted comforter, which neatly tied at the throat, descends straight and formally beneath his coat, and exhibits two fringed ends, which fall, in agreeable contrast of colour, over the before-mentioned apron. I never remember seeing a beggar of this class without an apron and a worsted comforter—they would appear to be his stock-in-trade, a necessary portion of his outfit; the white apron to relieve the sombre hue of his habiliments, and show up their well-brushed shabbiness; the scarlet comforter to contrast with the cadaverous complexion which he owes to art or nature. In winter the comforter also serves as an advertisement that his great-coat is gone.

The man I am describing wears a "pad" round his neck, on which is written—

Kind Friends and Christian Brethren!

I was once a
Respectable Tradesman,
doing a Good Business;
till Misfortune reduced me to
this Pass!
Be kind enough to Buy
some of the Articles I offer,
and you will confer a
Real Charity!

In his hands, on which he wears scrupulously-darned mittens, he carries a box or two of matches, or a few quires of note-paper or envelopes, and half-a-dozen small sticks of sealing-wax. He is also furnished with a shabby-genteel looking boy of about nine years old, who wears a Shakesperian collar, and the regulation worsted comforter, the ends of which nearly trail upon the ground. The poor child, whose features do not in the least resemble the man's, and who, too young to be his son, is too old to be his grandson, keeps his little hands in his large pockets, and tries to look as unhappy and half-starved as he can.

But the face of the beggar is a marvelous exhibition! His acting is admirable! Christian resignation and its consequent fortitude are written on his brow. His eyes roll imploringly, but no sound escapes him. The expression of his features almost pronounces, "Christian friend, purchase my humble wares, for I scorn to beg. I am starving, but tortures shall not wring the humiliating secret from my lips." He exercises a singular fascination over old ladies, who slide coppers into his hand quickly, as if afraid that they shall hurt his feelings. He pockets the money, heaves a sigh, and darts an abashed and grateful look at them that makes them feel how keenly he appreciates their delicacy. When the snow is on the ground he now and then introduces a little shiver, and with a well-worn pocket-handkerchief stifles a cough that he intimates by, a despairing dropping of his eyelids, is slowly killing him.

THE SWELL BEGGAR.

A singular variety of this sort of mendicant used to be seen some years ago in the streets of Cambridge. He had been a gentleman of property, and had studied at one of the colleges. Race-courses, billiard-tables, and general gambling had reduced him to beggary; but he was too proud to ask alms. As the "Ashamed Beggar" fortifies himself with a "pad," this swell-beggar armed himself with a broom. He swept a crossing. His clothes—he always wore evening-dress—were miserably ragged and shabby; his hat was a broken Gibus,

but he managed to have good and fashionable boots; and his shirt collar, and wristbands were changed every day. A white cambric handkerchief peeped from his coat-tail pocket, and a gold eye-glass dangled from his neck. His hands were lady-like; his nails well-kept; and it was impossible to look at him without a mingled feeling of pity and amusement.

His plan of operations was to station himself at his crossing at the time the ladies of Cambridge were out shopping. His antics were curiously funny. Dangling his broom between his fore-finger and thumb, as if it were a light umbrella or riding-whip, he would arrive at his stand, and look up at the sky to see what sort of weather might be expected. Then tucking the broom beneath his arm he would take off his gloves, fold them together and put them into his coat-pockets, sweep his crossing carefully, and when he had finished, look at it with admiration. When ladies crossed, he would remove his broken hat, and smile with great benignity, displaying at the same time a fine set of teeth. On wet days his attentions to the fair sex knew no bounds. He would run before them and wipe away every little puddle in their path. On receiving a gratuity, which was generally in silver, he would remove his hat and bow gracefully and gratefully. When gentlemen walked over his crossing he would stop them, and, holding his hat in the true mendicant fashion, request the loan of a shilling. With many he was a regular pensioner. When a mechanic or poor-looking person offered him a copper, he would take it, and smile his thanks with a patronising air, but he never took off his hat to less than sixpence. He was a jovial and boastful beggar, and had a habit of jerking at his stand-up collar, and pulling at his imperial comically. When he considered his day's work over, he would put on his gloves, and, dangling his broom in his careless elegant way, trip home to his lodging. He never used a broom but one day, and gave the old ones to his landlady. The undergraduates were kind to him, and encouraged his follies; but the college dons looked coldly on him, and when they passed him he would assume an expression of impertinent indifference as if he cut them. I never heard what became of him. When I last saw him he looked between forty and fifty years of age.

CLEAN FAMILY BEGGARS.

Clean Family Beggars are those who beg or sing in the streets, in numbers varying

from four to seven. I need only particularize one "gang" or "party," as their appearance and method of begging will do as a sample of all others.

Beggars of this class group themselves artistically. A broken-down looking man, in the last stage of seediness, walks hand-in-hand with a pale-faced, interesting little girl. His wife trudges on his other side, a baby in one arm; a child just able to walk steadies itself by the hand that is disengaged; two or three other children cling about the skirts of her gown, one occasionally detaching himself or herself—as a kind of rear or advanced guard from the main body—to cut off stragglers and pounce upon falling halfpence, or look piteously into the face of a passer-by. The clothes of the whole troop are in that state when seediness is dropping into rags; but their hands and faces are perfectly clean—their skins literally shine—perhaps from the effect of a plentiful use of soap, which they do not wash off before drying themselves with a towel. The complexions of the smaller children, in particular, glitter like sand-paper, and their eyes are half-closed, and their noses corrugated, as with constant and compulsory ablution. The baby is a wonderful specimen of washing and getting-up of ornamental linen. Altogether, the Clean Family Beggars form a most attractive picture for quiet and respectable streets, and "pose" themselves for the admiration of the thrifty matrons, who are their best supporters.

Sometimes the children of the Clean Family Beggars sing—sometimes the father "patters." This morning a group passed my window, who both sang and "pattered." The mother was absent, and the two eldest girls knitted and crocheted as they walked along. The burthen of the song which the children shrieked out in thin treble, was,

"And the wild flowers are springing on the plain."

The rest of the words were undistinguishable. When the little ones had finished, the man, who evidently prided himself upon his powers of eloquence, began, in a loud, authoritative, oratorical tone:—

"My dear friends,—It is with great pain, and affliction, and trouble, that I present myself and my poo—oor family before you, in this wretched situation, at the present moment; but what can I do? Work I cannot obtain, and my little family ask me for bread! Yes, my dear friends—my little family ask me for bread! Oh, my dear friends, conceive what your feelin's would be, if, like me, at the present moment your poo—oor dear children asked for bread,

and you had it not to give them! What then could you do? God send, my dear friends, that no individual, no father of a family, nor mother, nor other individual, with children, will ever, or ever may be drove to do what—or, I should say, that which I am now a-doing of, at the present moment. If any one in this street, or in the next, or in any of the streets in this affluent neighbourhood, had found themselves in the situation, in which I was placed this morning, it would be hard to say what they could, or would have done; and I assure you, my dear friends,—yes, I assure you, from my heart, that it is very possible that many might have been drove to have done, or do worse, than what I am a doing of, for the sake of my poo—oor family, at the present moment, if they had been drove, by suffering, as I and my poo—oor wife have been the morning of this very day. My wife, my kind friends, is now unfortunately ill through unmerited starvation, and is ill a-bed, from which, at the present moment, she cannot rise. Want we have known together, my dear friends, and so has our poo—oor family, and baby, only eight months old. God send, my dear friends, that none of you, and none of your dear babes, and families, that no individual, which now is listening to my deep distress, at the present moment, may ever know the sufferin's to which we have been reduced, is my fervent prayer! All I want to obtain is a meal's victuals for my poo—oor family!"

(Here the man caught my eye, and immediately shifted his ground.)

"You will ask me, my dear friends," he continued, in an argumentative manner, "you will ask me how and why it is, and what is the reason, which I cannot obtain work? Alas! my dear friends, it is unfortunately so at the present moment. I am a silk-weaver in Bethnal Green, by trade, and the noo International Treaty with France, which Mr. Cobden—" (here he kept his eye on me, as if the political reason were intended for my especial behoof)—"which Mr. Cobden, my dear friends, was deputed to go to the French emperor, Louis Napoleon, to agree upon, betwixt this country and France, which the French manufacturers sends goods into this country, without paying no duty, and undersells the native manufacturers, though, my dear friends, our workmanship is as good, and English silk as genuine as French, I do assure you. Leastways, there is no difference, except in pattern, and, through the neglect of them as ought to look after it better, that is, to

see we had the best designs; for design is the only thing—I mean design and pattern—in which they can outdo us; and also, my dear friends, ladies as go to shops will ask for foreign goods—it is more to their taste than English, at the present moment; and so it is, that many poo—oor families at Bethnal Green and Spitalfields—and Coventry likewise, is redooed to the situation which, I myself—that is, to ask your charity—am a doing of—at the present moment."

I gave a little girl a penny, and the man, still fixing me with his eye, continued—

"You will ask me, my dear friends, praps, how it is that I do not apply to the parish? why not to get relief for myself, my de—ar wife, and little family? My kind friends, you do not know the state in which things is with the poor weavers of Bethnal Green, and, at the present moment, Spitalfields likewise. It comes of the want of knowledge of the real state of this rich and 'appy country, its material prosperity and resources, which you, at this end of the town, can form no idea of. There is now sixteen or seventeen thousand people out of work. Yes, my dear friends, in about two parishes, there is sixteen or seventeen thousand individuals—I mean, of course, counting their poo—oor families and all, which at the present moment, cannot obtain bread. Oh, my dear friends, how grateful ought you be to God that you and your dear families, are not out of work, and can obtain a meal's victuals, and are not like the sufferin' weavers of Bethnal Green—and Spitalfields, and Coventry likewise, through the loss of trade; for, my dear friends, if you were like me, forced to what I am doing now at the present moment, &c., &c., &c."

NAVAL AND MILITARY BEGGARS

are most frequently met with in towns situated at some distance from a seaport or a garrison. As they are distinct specimens of the same tribe, they must be separately classified. The more familiar nuisance is the

TURNPIKE SAILOR.

This sort of vagabond has two lays, the "merchant" lay, and the "R'yal Navy" lay. He adopts either one or the other according to the exigencies of his wardrobe, his locality, or the person he is addressing. He is generally the offspring of some inhabitant of the most notorious haunts of a seaport town, and has seldom been at sea, or when he has, has run away after the first voyage. His slang of seamanship has been

picked up at the lowest public-houses in the filthiest slums that offer diversion to the genuine sailor.

When on the "merchant lay" his attire consists of a pair of tattered trousers, an old guernsey-shirt, and a torn straw-hat. One of his principal points of "costume" is his bare feet. His black silk handkerchief is knotted jauntily round his throat after the most approved models at the heads of penny ballads, and the outsides of songs. He wears small gold earrings, and has short curly hair in the highest and most offensive state of glossy greasiness. His hands and arms are carefully tattooed—a foul anchor, or a long-haired mermaid sitting on her tail and making her toilette, being the favourite cartoons. In his gait he endeavours to counterfeit the roll of a true seaman, but his hard feet, knock-knees, and imperceptibly acquired turnpike-trot betray him. His face bears the stamp of diabolically low cunning, and it is impossible to look at him without an association with a police-court. His complexion is coarse and tallowy, and has none of the manly bronze that exposure to the weather, and watching the horizon give to the real tar.

I was once walking with a gentleman who had spent the earlier portion of his life at sea, when a turnpike sailor shuffled on before us. We had just been conversing on nautical affairs, and I said to him—

"Now, there is a brother sailor in distress; of course you will give him something?"

"He a sailor!" said my friend, with great disgust. "Did you see him spit?"

The fellow had that moment expectorated.

I answered that I had.

"He spit to wind'ard!" said my friend.

"What of that?" said I.

"A regular landsman's trick," observed my friend. "A real sailor never spits to wind'ard. Why, he could'nt."

We soon passed the fellow, who pulled at a curl upon his forehead, and began in a gruff voice, intended to convey the idea of hardships, storms, shipwrecks, battles, and privations. "God—bless—your—onors—give—a—copper—to—a—poor—sailor—as—hasn't—spliced—the—main—jaw—since—the—day—fore—yesterday—at—eight—bells—God—love—yer—onors—do!—I—avent—tasted—sin'—the—day—fore—yesterday—so—drop—a—cop—poor—seaman—do."

My friend turned round and looked the beggar full in the face.

"What ship?" he asked, quickly.

The fellow answered glibly.

"What captain?" pursued my friend.

The fellow again replied boldly, though his eyes wandered uneasily.

"What cargo?" asked my inexorable companion.

The beggar was not at fault, but answered correctly.

The name of the port, the reason of his discharge, and other questions were asked and answered; but the man was evidently beginning to be embarrassed. My friend pulled out his purse as if to give him something.

"What are you doing here?" continued the indefatigable inquirer. "Did you leave the coast for the purpose of trying to find a ship *here*?" (We were in Leicester.)

The man stammered and pulled at his useful forelock to get time to collect his thoughts and invent a good lie.

"He had a friend in them parts as he thought could help him."

"How long since you were up the Baltic?"

"Year—and—a—arf,—yer—'onor."

"Do you know Kiel?"

"Yes,—yer—'onor."

"D'ye know the 'British Flag' on the quay there?"

"Yes,—yer—'onor."

"Been there often?"

"Yes,—yer—'onor."

"Does Nick Johnson still keep it?"

"Yes,—yer—'onor."

"Then," said my friend, after giving vent to a strong opinion as to the beggar's veracity, "I'd advise you to be off quickly, for there's a policeman, and if I get within hail of him I shall tell him you're an impostor. There's no such house on the quay. Get out, you scoundrel!"

The fellow shuffled off, looking curses, but not daring to express them.

On the "R'yal Navy" lay, the turnpike sailor assumes different habiliments, and altogether a smarter trim. He wears coarse blue trousers symmetrically cut about the hips, and baggy over the foot. A "jumper," or loose shirt of the same material, a tarpaulin hat, with the name of a vessel in letters of faded gold, is struck on the back of his neck, and he has a piece of whipcord, or "lanyard" round his waist, to which is suspended a jack-knife, which if of but little service in fighting the battles of his country has stood him in good stead in silencing the cackling of any stray poultry that crossed his road, or in frightening into liberality the female tenant of a solitary cottage. This "patter," or "blob," is of Plymouth, Portsmouth, Cawsen' Bay, Hamoaze—ships paid off, prize-money, the

bo'sen and the first le'tenant. He is always an able-bodied, never an ordinary seaman, and cannot get a ship "becos" orders is at the Hadmiralty as no more isn't to be put into commission. Like the fictitious merchant-sailor he calls every landsman "your honour," in accordance with the conventional rule observed by the jack tars in nautical dramas. He exhibits a stale plug of tobacco, and replaces it in his jaw with ostentatious gusto. His chief victims are imaginative boys fresh from "Robinson Crusoe," and "Tales of the Ocean," and old ladies who have relatives at sea. For many months after a naval battle he is in full force, and in inland towns tells highly-spiced narratives of the adventures of his own ship and its gallant crew in action. He is profuse in references to "the cap'en," and interlards his account with, "and the cap'en turns round, and he says to me, he says—" He feels the pulse of his listener's credulity through their eyes, and throws the hatchet with the enthusiasm of an artist. "When we boarded 'em," I heard one of these vagabonds say—"oh, when we boarded 'em!" but it is beyond the power of my feeble pen to relate the deeds of the turnpike true blue, and his ship and its gallant, gallant crew, when they boarded 'em, I let him run out his yarn, and then said, "I saw the account of the action in the papers, but they said nothing of boarding. As I read it, the enemy were in too shallow water to render that manœuvre possible; but that till they struck their flag, and the boats went out to take possession, the vessels were more than half a mile apart."

This would have posed an ordinary humbug, but the able-bodied liar immediately, and with great apparent disgust, said, "The papers! the noo—o—o—s—papers! d—n the noo—o—o—s—papers. You don't believe what they says, surely. Look how they sarved out old Charley Napier. Why, sir, *I was there, and I ought to know.*"

At times the turnpike sailor roars out a song in praise of British valour by sea; but of late this "lay" has been unfrequent. At others he borrows an interesting-looking little girl, and tying his arm up in a sling, adds his wounds and a motherless infant to his other claims upon the public sympathy. After a heavy gale and the loss of several vessels, he appears with a fresh tale and a new suit of carefully chosen rags. When all these resources fail him he is compelled to turn merchant, or "duffer," and invests a small capital in a few hundred of the worst, and a dozen or two of the very

best, cigars. If he be possessed of no capital he steals them. He allows his whiskers to grow round his face, and lubricates them in the same liberal manner as his shining hair. He buys a pea-coat, smart waistcoat, and voluminous trousers, discards his black neckerchief for a scarlet one, the ends of which run through a massive ring. He wears a large pair of braces over his waistcoat, and assumes a half-foreign air, as of a mariner just returned from distant climes. He accosts you in the streets mysteriously, and asks you if you want "a few good cigars?" He tells you they are smuggled, that he "run" them himself, and that the "Custom-us horficers" are after him. I need hardly inform my reader that the cigar he offers as a sample is excellent, and that, should he be weak enough to purchase a few boxes he will not find them "according to sample." Not unfrequently, the cigar—"duffer" lures his victim to some low tavern to receive his goods, where in lieu of tobacco, shawls, and laces, he finds a number of cut-throat-looking confederates, who plunder and illtreat him.

It must not be forgotten that at times a begging sailor may be met, who has really been a seaman, and who is a proper object of benevolence. When it is so, he is invariably a man past middle age, and offers for sale or exhibition a model of a man-of-war or a few toy yachts. He has but little to say for himself, and is too glad for the gift of a pair of landsmen's trousers to trouble himself about their anti-nautical cut. In fact, the real seaman does not care for costume, and is as frequently seen in an old shooting-coat as a torn jacket; but despite his habiliments, the true salt oozes out in the broad hands that dangle heavily from the wrists, as if wanting to grip a rope or a handspike; in the tender feet accustomed to the smooth planks of the deck, and in the settled, far-off look of the weather-beaten head, with its fixed expression of the aristocracy of subordination.

In conclusion, a real sailor is seldom or never seen inland, where he can have no chance of employment, and is removed from the sight of the sea, docks, shipmates, and all things dear and familiar to him. He carries his papers about him in a small tin box, addresses those who speak to him as "sir" and "marm," and never as "your honour" or "my lady;" is rather taciturn than talkative, and rarely brags of what he has seen, or done, or seen done. In these and all other respects he is the exact opposite of the turnpike sailor.

STREET CAMPAIGNERS.

Soldier beggars may be divided into three classes: those who really have been soldiers and are reduced to mendicancy, those who have been ejected from the army for misconduct, and those with whom the military dress and bearing are pure assumptions.

The difference between these varieties is so distinct as to be easily detected. The first, or soldier proper, has all the evidence of drill and barrack life about him; the eye that always "fronts" the person he addresses; the spare habit, high cheek-bones, regulation whisker, stiff chin, and deeply-marked line beneath from ear to ear. He carries his papers about him, and when he has been wounded or seen service, is modest and retiring as to his share of glory. He can give little information as to the incidents of an engagement, except as regards the deeds of his own company, and in conversation speaks more of the personal qualities of his officers and comrades than of their feats of valour. Try him which way you will he never will confess that he has killed a man. He compensates himself for his silence on the subject of fighting by excessive grumbling as to the provisions, quarters, &c., to which he has been forced to submit in the course of his career. He generally has a wife marching by his side—a tall strapping woman, who looks as if a long course of washing at the barracks had made her half a soldier. Ragged though he be, there is a certain smartness about the soldier proper, observable in the polish of his boots, the cock of his cap, and the disposition of the leather strap under his lower lip. He invariably carries a stick, and when a soldier passes him, casts on him an odd sort of look, half envying, half pitying, as if he said, "Though you are better fed than I, you are not so free!"

The soldier proper has various occupations. He does not pass all his time in begging: he will hold a horse, clean knives and boots, sit as a model to an artist, and occasionally take a turn at the wash-tub. Begging he abhors, and is only driven to it as a last resource.

If my readers would inquire why a man so ready to work should not be able to obtain employment, he will receive the answer that universally applies to all questions of hardship among the humbler classes—the vice of the discharged soldier is intemperance.

The second sort of soldier-beggar is one of the most dangerous and violent of men.

dicants. Untamable even by regimental discipline, insubordinate by nature, he has been thrust out from the army to prey upon society. He begs but seldom, and is dangerous to meet with after dark upon a lonely road, or in a sequestered lane. Indeed, though he has every right to be classed among those who will not work, he is not thoroughly a beggar, but will be met with again, and receive fuller justice at our hands, in the, to him, more congenial catalogue of thieves.

The third sort of street campaigner is a perfect impostor, who being endowed, either by accident or art, with a broken limb or damaged feature, puts on an old military coat, as he would assume the dress of a frozen-out gardener, distressed dock-yard labourer, burnt-out tradesman, or scalded mechanic. He is imitative, and in his time plays many parts. He "gets up" his costume with the same attention to detail as the turnpike sailor. In crowded busy streets he "stands pad," that is, with a written statement of his hard case slung round his neck, like a label round a decanter. His bearing is most military; he keeps his neck straight, his chin in, and his thumbs to the outside seams of his trousers; he is stiff as an embalmed preparation, for which, but for the motion of his eyes, you might mistake him. In quiet streets and in the country he discards his "pad" and begs "on the blob," that is, he "patters" to the passers-by, and invites their sympathy by word of mouth. He is an ingenious and fertile liar, and seizes occasions such as the late war in the Crimea and the mutiny in India as good distant grounds on which to build his fictions.

I was walking in a high-road, when I was accosted by a fellow dressed in an old military tunic, a forage-cap like a charity boy's, and tattered trousers, who limped along barefoot by the aid of a stick. His right sleeve was empty, and tied up to a button-hole at his breast, *à la* Nelson.

"Please your honour," he began, in a doleful exhausted voice, "bestow your charity on a poor soldier which lost his right arm at the glorious battle of Inkermann."

I looked at him, and having considerable experience in this kind of imposition, could at once detect that he was "acting."

"To what regiment did you belong?" I asked.

"The Thirty —, sir."

I looked at his button and read Thirty —

"I haven't tasted bit o' food, sir, since yesterday at half-past four, and then a lady give me a cruster bread," he continued.

"The Thirty —!" I repeated "I knew

the Thirty —. Let me see—who was the colonel?"

The man gave me a name, with which I suppose he was provided.

"How long were you in the Thirty —?" I inquired.

"Five year, sir."

"I had a schoolfellow in that regiment, Captain Thorpe, a tall man with red whiskers—did you know him?"

"There was a captain, sir, with large red whiskers, and I think his name was Thorpe; but he warn't captain of my company, so I didn't know for certain," replied the man, after an affected hesitation.

"The Thirty — was one of the first of our regiments that landed, I think?" I remarked.

"Yes, your honour, it were."

"You impudent impostor!" I said; "the Thirty — did not go out till the spring of '55. How dare you tell me you belonged to it?"

The fellow blenched for a moment, but rallied and said, "I didn't like to contradict your honour for fear you should be angry and wouldn't give me nothing."

"That's very polite of you," I said, "but still I have a great mind to give you into custody. Stay; tell me who and what you are, and I will give you a shilling and let you go."

He looked up and down the road, measured me with his eye, abandoned the idea of resistance, and replied:

"Well, your honour, if you won't be too hard on a poor man which finds it hard to get a crust anyhow or way, I don't mind telling you I never was a soldier." I give his narrative as he related it to me.

"I don't know who my parents ever was. The fust thing as I remember was the river side (the Thames), and running in low tide to find things. I used to beg, hold hosses, and sleep under dry arches. I don't remember how I got any clothes. I never had a pair of shoes or stockings till I was almost a man. I fancy I am now nearly forty years of age."

"An old woman as kep a rag and iron shop by the water-side give me a lodging once for two years. We used to call her 'Nanny'; but she turned me out when she caught me taking some old nails and a brass cock out of her shop; I was hungry when I done it, for the old gal gi' me no grub, nothing but the bare floor for a bed."

"I have been a beggar all my life, and begged in all sorts o' ways and all sorts o' lays. I don't mean to say that if I see anything laying about handy that I don't mouch it (*i. e.* steal it). Once a gentle-

man took me into his house as his servant. He was a very kind man; I had a good place, swell clothes, and beef and beer as much as I liked; but I couldn't stand the life, and I run away.

"The loss o' my arm, sir, was the best thing as ever happen'd to me: it's been a living to me; I turn out with it on all sorts o' lays, and it's as good as a pension. I lost it poaching; my mate's gun went off by accident, and the shot went into my arm, I neglected it, and at last was obliged to go to a orspital and have it off. The surgeon as amputated it said that a little longer and it would ha' mortified."

"The Crimea's been a good dodge to a many, but it's getting stale; all dodges are getting stale; square coves (*i. e.*, honest folks) are so wide awake."

"Don't you think you would have found it more profitable, had you taken to labour or some honester calling than your present one?" I asked.

"Well, sir, p'raps I might," he replied; "but going on the square is so dreadfully confining."

FOREIGN BEGGARS.

These beggars appeal to the sympathies as "strangers"—in a foreign land, away from friends and kindred, unable to make their wants known, or to seek work, from ignorance of the language.

In exposing the shams and swindles that are set to catch the unwary, I have no wish to check the current of real benevolence. Cases of distress exist, which it is a pleasure and a duty to relieve. I only expose the "dodges" of the beggar by profession—the beggar by trade—the beggar who lives by begging, and nothing else, except, as in most cases, where he makes the two ends of idleness and self-indulgence meet,—by thieving.

Foreign beggars are generally so mixed up with political events, that in treating of them, it is more than usually difficult to detect imposition from misfortune. Many high-hearted patriots have been driven to this country by tyrants and their tools, but it will not do to mistake every vagabond refugee for a noble exile, or to accept as a fact that a man who cannot live in his own country, is necessarily persecuted and unfortunate, and has a claim to be helped to live in this.

The neighbourhood of Leicester Square is, to the foreign political exile, the foreign political spy, the foreign fraudulent tradesman, the foreign escaped thief, and the foreign convict who has served his time,

what, in the middle-ages, sanctuary was to the murderer. In this modern Alsatia—happily for us, guarded by native policemen and detectives of every nation in the world—plots are hatched, fulminating powder prepared, detonating-balls manufactured, and infernal machines invented, which, wielded by the hands of men whose opinions are so far beyond the age in which they live, that their native land has cast them out for ever; are destined to overthrow despotic governments, restore the liberty of the subject, and, in a wholesale sort of way, regenerate the rights of man.

Political spies are the monied class among these philanthropic desperadoes. The political regenerators, unless furnished with means from some special fund, are the most miserable and abject. Mr. Thackeray has observed that whenever an Irishman is in difficulties he always finds another Irishman worse off than himself, who talks over creditors, borrows money, runs errands, and makes himself generally useful to his incarcerated fellow-countryman. This observation will apply equally to foreigners.

There is a timid sort of refugee, who lacking the courage to arrive at political eminence or cash, by means of steel, or poison, is a hanger-on of his bolder and less scrupulous compatriot. This man, when deserted by his patron, is forced to beg. The statement that he makes as to his reasons for leaving the dear native land that the majority of foreigners are so ready to sing songs in praise of, and to quit, must be, of course, received with caution.

THE FRENCH BEGGAR.

My reader has most likely, in a quiet street, met a shabby little man, who stares about him in a confused manner, as if he had lost his way. As soon as he sees a decently-dressed person he shuffles up to him, and taking off a "casquette" with considerably more brim than body, makes a slight bow, and says in a plaintive voice, "Parlez Français, m'sieu?"

If you stop and, in an unguarded moment, answer "Oui," the beggar takes from his breast-pocket a greasy leather book, from which he extracts a piece of carefully folded paper, which he hands you with a pathetic shrug.

The paper, when opened, contains a small slip, on which is written in a light, foreign hand—

"You are requested to direct the bearer to the place to which he desires to go, as he cannot speak English!"

The beggar then, with a profusion of bows, points to the larger paper.

"Mais, m'sieu, ayez la bonté de lire. C'est Anglais."

The larger paper contains a statement in French and English, that the bearer Jean Baptiste Dupont is a native of Troyes, Champagne, and a fan-maker by trade; that paralysis in the hand has deprived him of the power of working; that he came to England to find a daughter, who had married an Englishman and was dwelling in Westminster, but that when he arrived he found they had parted for Australia; that he is fifty-two years of age, and is a deserving object of compassion, having no means of returning to Troyes, being an entire stranger to England, and having no acquaintances or friends to assist him.

This statement is without any signature, but no sooner have you read it than the beggar, who would seem to have a blind credence in the efficacy of documents, draws from his pocket-book a certificate of birth, a register of marriage, a passport, and a permission to embark, which, being all in a state of crumpled greasiness, and printed and written in French, so startles and confounds the reader, that he drops something into the man's hand and passes on.

I have been often stopped by this sort of beggar. In the last case I met with I held a long talk with the man—of course, in his own language, for he will seldom or never be betrayed into admitting that he has any knowledge of English.

"Parlez Français, m'sieu?"

"Yes, I do," I answered. "What do you want?"

"Deign, monsieur, to have the bounty to read this paper which I have the honour to present to monsieur."

"Oh, never mind the papers!" I said, shortly. "Can't you speak English?"

"Aias, monsieur, no!"

"Speak French, then!"

My quick speaking rather confused the fellow, who said that he was without bread, and without asylum; that he was a tourneur and ebeniste (turner, worker in ebony and ivory, and cabinet-maker in general) by trade, that he was a stranger, and wished to raise sufficient money to enable him to return to France.

"Why did you come over to England?" I asked.

"I came to work in London," he said, after pretending not to understand my question the first time.

"Where?" I inquired.

At first I understood him to answer Sheffield, but I at last made out that he meant Smithfield.

"What was your master's name?"

"I do not comprehend, monsieur—if monsieur will deign to read—"

"You comprehend me perfectly well; don't pretend that you don't—that is only shuffling (tracasserie).

"The name of my master was Johnson."

"Why did you leave him?" I inquired.

"He is dead, monsieur."

"Why did you not return to France at his death?" was my next question.

"Monsieur, I tried to obtain work in England," said the beggar.

"How long did you work for Mr. Johnson?"

"There was a long time, monsieur, that—"

"How long?" I repeated. "How many years?"

"Since two years."

"And did you live in London two years, and all that time learn to speak no English?"

"Ah, monsieur, you embarrass me. If monsieur will not deign to aid me, it must be that I seek elsewhere—"

"But tell me how it was you learnt no English," I persisted.

"Ah, monsieur, my comrades in the shop were all French."

"And you want to get back to France?"

"Ah, monsieur, it is the hope of my life."

"Come to me to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock—there is my address." I gave him the envelope of a letter. "I am well acquainted with the French Consul at London Bridge, and at my intercession I am sure that he will get you a free passage to Calais; if not, and I find he considers your story true, I will send you at my own expense. Good night!"

Of course the man did not call in the morning, and I saw no more of him.

DESTITUTE POLES.

It is now many years since the people of this country evinced a strong sympathy for Polish refugees. Their gallant struggle, compulsory exile, and utter national and domestic ruin raised them warm friends in England; and committees for the relief of destitute Poles, balls for the benefit of destitute Poles, and subscriptions for the relief of the destitute Poles were got up in every market-town. Shelter and sustenance were afforded to many gentlemen of undoubted integrity, who found themselves penniless in a strange land, and the aristocracy fêted and caressed the best-born and most gallant. To be a Pole, and in distress, was almost a sufficient introduction, and there were few English families who did not entertain as friend or

visitor one of these unfortunate and suffering patriots.

So excellent an opportunity for that class of foreign swindlers which haunt roulette-tables, and are the pest of second-rate hotels abroad, was of course made use of. Crowds of adventurers, "got up" in furs, and cloaks, and playhouse dresses, with padded breasts and long moustachios, flocked to England, and assuming the title of count, and giving out that their patrimony had been sequestered by the Emperor of Russia, easily obtained a hearing and a footing in many English families, whose heads would not have received one of their own countrymen except with the usual credentials.

John Bull's partiality for foreigners is one of his well-known weaknesses; and valets, cooks, and couriers in their masters' clothes, and sometimes with the titles of that master whom they had seen shot down in battle, found themselves objects of national sympathy and attention. Their success among the fair sex was extraordinary; and many penniless adventurers, with no accomplishments beyond card-sharpening, and a foreign hotel waiter's smattering of continental languages, allied themselves to families of wealth and respectability. All, of course, were not so fortunate; and after some persons had been victimized, a few inquiries made, and the real refugee gentlemen and soldiers had indignantly repudiated any knowledge of the swindlers or their pretensions, the pseudo-Polish exiles were compelled to return to their former occupations. The least able and least fortunate were forced to beg, and adopted exactly the same tactics as the French beggar, except that instead of certificates of birth, and passports, he exhibited false military documents, and told lying tales of regimental services, Russian prisons, and miraculous escapes.

The "destitute Pole" is seldom met with now, and would hardly have demanded a notice if I had not thought it right to show how soon the unsuccessful cheat or swindler drops down into the beggar, and to what a height the "Polish fever" raged some thirty years ago. It would be injustice to a noble nation if I did not inform my reader that but few of the false claimants to British sympathy were Poles at all. They were Russians, Frenchmen, Hungarians, Austrians, Prussians, and Germans of all sorts.

The career of one fellow will serve to show with what little ingenuity the credulous can be imposed on. His real name is lost among his numerous aliases, neither do

I know whether he commenced life as a soldier, or as a valet; but I think it probable that he had combined those occupations and been regimental servant to an officer. He came to London in the year 1833 under the name of Count Stanislas Soltiewski, of Ostralenka; possessed of a handsome person and invulnerable audacity, he was soon received into decent society, and in 1837 married a lady of some fortune, squandered her money, and deserted her. He then changed his name to Levieczin, and travelled from town to town, giving political lectures at town-halls, assembly-rooms, and theatres. In 1842 he called himself Doctor Telecki, said he was a native of Smolensk, and set up a practice in Manchester, where he contracted a large amount of debts. From Manchester he eloped with one of his patients, a young lady to whom he was married in 1845, in Dublin, in which place he again endeavoured to practise as a physician. He soon involved himself in difficulties, and quitted Dublin, taking with him funds which had been entrusted to him as treasurer of a charitable institution. He left his second wife, and formed a connexion with another woman, travelled about, giving scientific lectures, and sometimes doing feats of legerdemain. He again married a widow lady who had some four or five hundred pounds, which he spent, after which he deserted her. He then became the scourge and terror of hotel-keepers, and went from tavern to tavern living on every luxury, and, when asked for money, decamping, and leaving behind him nothing but portmanteaus filled with straw and bricks. He returned to England and obtained a situation in a respectable academy as a teacher of French and the guitar. Here he called himself Count Hohenbreitenstein-Boitzenburg.

Under this name he seduced a young lady, whom he persuaded he could not marry on account of her being a Protestant, and of his being a Count of the Holy Roman Empire in the pontifical degree. By threatening exposure he extracted a large sum of money from her friends, with which he returned to London, where he lived for some time by begging letters, and obtaining money on various false pretences. His first wife discovered him, and he was charged with bigamy, but owing to some technical informality was not convicted. He then enlisted in the 87th regiment, from which he shortly after deserted. He became the associate of thieves and the prostitutes who live in the neighbourhood of Waterloo Road. After being several

times imprisoned for petty thefts he at length earned a miserable living by con-juring in low public-houses, where he announced himself as the celebrated Polish professor of legerdemain, Count Makvicz.

He died in August, 1852, and, oddly enough, in a garret in Poland Street, Oxford Street.

Of modern Polish swindlers and beggars, the most renowned is Adolphus Czapolinski. This "shabby genteel man of military appearance"—I quote the daily papers,—“has been several times incarcerated, has again offended, and been again imprisoned. His fraudulent practices were first discovered in 1860.” The following is from the *Times*, of June the 5th of that year:—

“**BOW STREET.**—A military-looking man, who said his name was Lorenzo Noodt, and that he had served as captain in one of our foreign legions during the Crimean war, was brought before Mr. Henry on a charge of attempting to obtain money by false and fraudulent pretences from the Countess of Waldegrave.”

Mr. George Granville Harcourt (the husband of Lady Waldegrave, deposed:

“I saw the prisoner to-day at my house in Carlton Gardens, where he called by my request in reference to a letter which Lady Waldegrave had received from him. It was a letter soliciting charitable contributions, and enclosing three papers. The first purported to be a note from Lady Stafford, enclosing a post-office order for 3*l.* I know her ladyship's handwriting, and this is like it, but I cannot say whether it is genuine. The second is apparently a note from Colonel Macdonald, sending him a post-office order for 4*l.* on the part of the Duke of Cambridge. The third is a note purporting to be written by the secretary of the Duke d'Aumale. This note states that the duke approves this person's departure for Italy, and desires his secretary to send him 5*l.* We were persuaded that it could not be genuine, in the first place, as we have the honour of being intimate with the Duke d'Aumale. We perfectly well knew that he would not say to this individual, or to any one else, that he approved his departure for Italy; in the second place, there are mistakes in the French which render it impossible that the duke's secretary should have written it; in the third place, the name is not that of the secretary, though resembling it. Under all the circumstances, I took an opportunity of asking both the secretary and the Duke d'Aumale whether they had any knowledge of this communication, and they stated that they knew nothing of it. The duke said that it was very disagreeable

to him that he should be supposed to be interfering to forward the departure of persons to Italy, which would produce an impression that he was meddling in the affairs of that country. I wrote to the prisoner to call on me, in order to receive back his papers. At first another man called, but on his addressing me in French I said, ‘You are an Italian, not a German. I want to see the captain himself.’ To-day the prisoner called. I showed the papers, and asked him if they were the letters he had received, and if he had received the money referred to in those letters. To both questions he replied in the affirmative. The officer Horsford, with whom I had communicated in the meanwhile, was in the next room. I called him in, and he went up to Captain Noodt, telling him he was his prisoner. He asked why? Horsford replied, for attempting to obtain money by means of a forged letter. He then begged me not to ruin him, and said that the letter was not written by him.”

The prisoner's letter to Lady Waldegrave was then read as follows:—

“**MILADY COUNTESS,**

“I am foreigner, but have the rank of captain by my service under English colours in the Crimean war, being appointed by her Majesty's brevet. I have struggled very hard, after having been discharged from the service, but, happily, I have been temporarily assisted by some persons of distinction, and the Duke of Cambridge. To-day, milady Countess, I have in object to ameliorate or better my condition, going to accept service in Italian lawful army, where by the danger I may obtain advancement. Being poor, I am obliged to solicit of my noble patrons towards my journey. The Duc d'Aumale, the Marchioness of Stafford, &c., kindly granted me their contributions. Knowing your ladyship's connexion with those noble persons, I take the liberty of soliciting your ladyship's kind contribution to raise any funds for my outfit and journey. In ‘appui’ of my statements I enclose my captain's commission and letters, and, in recommending myself to your ladyship's consideration, I present my homage, and remain,

“Your humble servant,

“**CAPTAIN L. B. NOODT.**”

The letter of the pretended secretary was as follows:—

“**MONSIEUR LE CAPITAINE,**

“Son altesse Monseigneur le Duc d'Aumale approuve votre départ pour l'Italie, et pour vous aider dans la dépense de votre

voyage m'a chargé de vous transmettre 5*l.*, ci inclus, que vous m'obligerez de m'en accuser la réception.

“Agréez, monsieur le capitaine, l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

“Votre humble serviteur,

“**CHS. COULEUVRIER, Sec.**”

The prisoner, who appeared much agitated, acknowledged the dishonesty of his conduct, but appealed to the pity of Mr. Harcourt, saying that he had suffered great hardships, and had been driven to this act by want. It was said that an officer bearing the Queen's commission should be so humiliated. The letter was not written by himself, but by a Frenchman who led him into it.

Mr. Henry said he had brought the humiliation on himself. He must be well aware that the crime of forgery was punished as severely in his own country as here. The prisoner should have the opportunity of producing the writer of the letter, or of designating him to the police. On the recommendation to mercy of Mr. Harcourt, he was only sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

On July the 9th he was brought up to Marlborough Street by Horsford, the officer of the Mendicity Society, charged with obtaining by false and fraudulent pretences the sum of 3*l.* from Lady Stafford. Since his imprisonment it had been discovered that his real name was Adolphus Czapolinski, and that he was a Pole. The real Captain Noodt was in a distant part of the kingdom, and Czapolinski had obtained surreptitious possession of his commission, and assumed his name. The indefatigable Mr. Horsford had placed himself in communication with the secretary of the Polish Association, who had known the prisoner (Czapolinski) for twenty-five years. It would seem that in early life he had been engaged under various foreign powers, and in 1835 he came to this country and earned a scanty maintenance as a teacher of languages; that he was addicted to drinking, begging, and thieving, and upon one occasion, when usher in a school, he robbed the pupils of their clothes, and even fleeced them of their trifling pocket-money. While in the House of Detention he had written to Captain Wood, the secretary of the Mendicity Society, offering to turn approver. The letter in question ran thus:—

“**SIR,**—Permit me to make you a request, which is, not to press your prosecution against me, and I most solemnly promise you that for this favour all my endeavours will be to render you every assistance for all the information you should require. I

was very wrong to not speak to you when I was at your office, but really I was not guilty of this charge, because the letter containing the post-office order was delivered to Captain Noodt. I was only the messenger from Lady Stafford.

“Look, Captain Wood, I know much, and no one can be so able to render you the assistance and information of all the foreigners than me. Neither any of your officers could find the way; but if you charge me to undertake to find I will, on only one condition—that you will stop the prosecution. The six weeks of detention were quite sufficient punishment to me for the first time; and let it be understood that for your condescension to stop the prosecution all my services shall be at your orders, whenever you shall require, without any remuneration. My offers will be very advantageous to you under every respect. Send any of your clerks to speak with me to make my covenant with you, and you will be better convinced of my good intentions to be serviceable to you.

“I am, &c.,

“**A. CZAPOLINSKI.**”

He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and hard labour.

Czapolinski is one of the most extraordinary of the beggars of the present day. He raises money both by personal application and by letter. He has been known to make from 20*l.* to 60*l.* per day. He is a great gambler, and has been seen to lose—and to pay—upwards of 100*l.* at a gambling house in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square in the course of a single night and morning.

HINDOO BEGGARS

Are those spare, snake-eyed Asiatics who walk the streets, coolly dressed in Manchester cottons, or chintz of a pattern commonly used for bed-furniture, to which the resemblance is carried out by the dark, polished colour of the thin limbs which it envelopes. They very often affect to be converts to the Christian religion, and give away tracts; with the intention of entrapping the sympathy of elderly ladies. They assert that they have been high-caste Brahmins, but as untruth, even when not acting professionally, is habitual to them, there is not the slightest dependence to be placed on what they say. Sometimes, in the winter, they “do shallow,” that is, stand on the kerb-stone of the pavement, in their thin, ragged clothes, and shiver as with cold and hunger, or crouch against a wall and whine like a whipped animal; at others they turn

out with a small, barrel-shaped drum, on which they make a monotonous noise with their fingers, to which music they sing and dance. Or they will "stand pad with a fakement," *i. e.* wear a placard upon their breasts, that describes them as natives of Madagascar, in distress, converts to Christianity, anxious to get to a seaport where they can work their passage back. This is a favourite artifice with Lascars—or they will sell lucifers, or sweep a crossing, or do anything where their picturesque appearance, of which they are proud and conscious, can be effectively displayed. They are as cunning as they look, and can detect a sympathetic face among a crowd. They never beg of soldiers, or sailors, to whom they always give a wide berth as they pass them in the streets.

From the extraordinary mendacity of this race of beggars—a mendacity that never falters, hesitates, or stumbles, but flows on in an unbroken stream of falsehood,—it is difficult to obtain any reliable information respecting them. I have, however, many reasons for believing that the following statement, which was made to me by a very dirty and distressed Indian, is moderately true. The man spoke English like a cockney of the lowest order. I shall not attempt to describe the peculiar accent or construction which he occasionally gave to it.

"My name is Joaleeka. I do not know where I was born. I never knew my father. I remember my mother very well. From the first of my remembrance I was at Dumdum, where I was servant to a European officer—a great man—a prince—who had more than a hundred servants beside me. When he went away to fight, I followed among others—I was with the baggage. I never fought myself, but I have heard the men (Sepoys) say that the prince, or general, or colonel, liked nothing so well as fighting, except tiger-hunting. He was a wonderful man, and his soldiers liked him very much. I travelled over a great part of India with Europeans. I went up country as far as Secunderabad, and learned to speak English very well—so well that, when I was quite a young man, I was often employed as interpreter, for I caught up different Indian languages quickly. At last I got to interpret so well that I was recommended to —, a great native prince who was coming over to England. I was not his interpreter, but interpreter to his servants. We came to London. We stopped in an hotel in Vere-street, Oxford-street. We stayed here some time. Then my chief

his servants with him. I stopped at the hotel to interpret for those who remained. It was during this time that I formed a connexion with a white woman. She was a servant in the hotel. I broke my caste, and from that moment I knew that it would not do for me to go back to India. The girl fell in the family-way, and was sent out of the house. My fellow-servants knew of it, and as many of them hated me, I knew that they would tell my master on his return. I also knew that by the English laws in England I was a free man, and that my master could not take me back against my will. If I had gone back, I should have been put to death for breaking my caste. When my master returned from France, he sent for me. He told me that he had heard of my breaking my caste, and of the girl, but that he should take no notice of it; that I was to return to Calcutta with him, where he would get me employment with some European officer; that I need not fear, as he would order his servants to keep silent on the subject. I salaamed and thanked him, and said I was his slave for ever; but at the same time I knew that he would break his word, and that when he had me in his power, he would put me to death. He was a very severe man about caste. I attended to all my duties as before, and all believed that I was going back to India—but the very morning that my master started for the coast, I ran away. I changed my clothes at the house of a girl I knew—not the same one as I had known at the hotel, but another. This one lived at Seven Dials. I stopped in-doors for many days, till this girl, who could read newspapers, told me that my master had sailed away. I felt very glad, for though I knew my master could not force me to go back with him, yet I was afraid for all that, for he knew the King and the Queen, and had been invited by the Lord Mayor to the City. I liked England better than India, and English women have been very kind to me. I think English women are the handsomest in the world. The girl in whose house I hid, showed me how to beg. She persuaded me to turn Christian, because she thought that it would do me good—so I turned Christian. I do not know what it means, but I am a Christian, and have been for many years. I married that girl for some time. I have been married several times. I do not mean to say that I have ever been to church as rich folks do; but I have been married without that. Sometimes I do well, and sometimes badly. I often get a pound or two by interpreting. I am not

at all afraid of meeting any Indian who knew me, for if they said anything I did not like, I should call out "Police!" I know the law better than I did. Every thing is free in England. You can do what you like, if you can pay, or are not found out. I do not like policemen. After the mutiny in 1857 I did very badly. No one would look at a poor Indian then—much less give to him. I knew that the English would put it down soon, because I know what those rascals over there are like. I am living now in Charles Street, Drury Lane. I have been married to my present wife six years. We have three children and one dead. My eldest is now in the hospital with a bad arm. I swept a crossing for two years; that was just before the mutiny. All that knew me used to chaff me about it, and call me Johnny Sepoy. My present wife is Irish, and fought two women about it. They were taken to Bow-street by a policeman, but the judge would not hear them. My wife is a very good wife to me, but she gets drunk too often. If it were not for that, I should like her better. I ran away from her once, but she came after me with all the children. Sometimes I make twelve shillings a week. I could make much more by interpreting, but I do not like to go among the nasty natives of my country. I believe I am more than fifty years of age."

NEGRO BEGGARS.

The negro beggar so nearly resembles the Hindoo that what I have said of one, I could almost say of the other. There are, however, these points of difference. The negro mendicant, who is usually an American negro, never studies the picturesque in his attire. He relies on the abject misery and down-trodden despair of his appearance, and generally represents himself as a fugitive slave—with this exception, his methods of levying contributions are precisely the same as his lighter-skinned brother's.

Some years ago it was a common thing to see a negro with tracts in his hand, and a placard upon his breast, upon which was a wood-cut of a black man, kneeling, his wrists heavily chained, his arms held high in supplication, and round the picture, forming a sort of proscenium or frame, the words: "Am I not a man and a brother?" At the time that the suppression of the slave trade created so much excitement, this was so excellent a "dodge" that many white beggars, fortunate enough to possess a flattish or turned-up nose, *died themselves black* and "stood pad" as real Africans.

The imposture, however, was soon detected and punished.

There are but few negro beggars to be seen now. It is only common fairness to say that negroes seldom, if ever, shirk work. Their only trouble is to obtain it. Those who have seen the many negroes employed in Liverpool, will know that they are hard-working, patient, and, too often, underpaid. A negro will sweep a crossing, run errands, black boots, clean knives and forks, or dig for a crust and a few pence. The few impostors among them are to be found among those who go about giving lectures on the horrors of slavery, and singing variations on the "escapes" in that famous book 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Negro servants are seldom read of in police reports, and are generally found to give satisfaction to their employers. In the east end of London negro beggars are to be met with, but they are seldom beggars by profession. Whenever they are out of work they have no scruples, but go into the streets, take off their hats, and beg directly.

I was accosted by one in Whitechapel, from whom I obtained the following statement:—

"My father was a slave, so was my mother. I have heard my father say so. I have heard them tell how they got away, but I forget all about it. It was before I was born. I am the eldest son. I had only one brother. Three years after his birth my mother died. My father was a shoe-black in New York. He very often had not enough to eat. My brother got a place as a servant, but I went out in the streets to do what I could. About the same time that my father, who was an old man, died, my brother lost his place. We agreed to come to England together. My brother had been living with some Britishers, and he had heard them say that over here niggers were as good as whites; and that the whites did not look down on them and illtreat them, as they do in New York. We went about and got odd jobs on the quay, and at last we hid ourselves in the hold of a vessel, bound for Liverpool. I do not know how long we were hid, but I remember we were terribly frightened lest we should be found out before the ship got under weigh. At last hunger forced us out, and we rapped at the hatches; at first we were not heard, but when we shouted out, they opened the hatches, and took us on deck. They flogged us very severely, and treated us shamefully all the voyage. When we got to Liverpool, we begged and got odd jobs

At last we got engaged in a travelling circus, where we were servants, and used to ride about with the band in beautiful dresses, but the grooms treated us so cruelly that we were forced to run away from that. I forget the name of the place that we were performing at, but it was not a day's walk from London. We begged about for some time. At last, my brother—his name is Aaron—got to clean the knives and forks at a slap-bang (an eating-house) in the city. He was very fortunate, and used to save some bits for me. He never takes any notice of me now. He is doing very well. He lives with a great gentleman in Harewood-square, and has a coat with silver buttons, and a gold-laced hat. He is very proud, and I do not think would speak to me if he saw me. I don't know how I live, or how much I get a week. I do porter's work mostly, but I do anything I can get. I beg more than half the year. I have no regular lodging. I sleep where I can. When I am in luck, I have a bed. It costs me threepence. At some places they don't care to take a man of colour in. I sometimes get work in Newgate-market, carrying meat, but not often. Ladies give me halfpence oftener than men. The butchers call me 'Othello,' and ask me why I killed my wife. I have tried to get aboard a ship, but they won't have me. I don't know how old I am, but I know that when we got to London, it was the time the Great Exhibition was about. I can lift almost any weight when I have had a bit of something to eat. I don't care for beer. I like rum best. I have often got drunk, but never when I paid for it myself."

The following cases of genuine distress fell under my notice. My readers will observe the difference of tone, the absence of clap-trap, and desire to enlarge upon a harrowing fact of those unfortunates who have been reduced to beggary, compared with the practised shuffle and conventional whine of the mendicant by profession.

I was standing with a friend at the counter of a tavern in Oxford Street, when a man came in and asked me to help him with a penny.

I saw at a glance that he was a workman at some hard-working trade. His face was bronzed, and his large, hard hands were unmistakably the hands of a labourer. He kept his eyes fixed on me as he spoke, and begged with a short pipe in his mouth.

I asked him if he would have some beer? "Thank ye, sir, I don't want beer so much as I want a penny loaf. I haven't tasted

since morn, and I'm not the man I was fifteen year ago, and I feel it."

"Will you have some bread-and-cheese and beer?" I asked.

"Thank ye, sir; bread-and-cheese and beer, and thank ye, sir; for I'm beginning to feel I want something."

I asked the man several questions, and he made the following statement:—

"I'm a miner, sir, and I've been working lately five mile from Castleton in Derbyshire. Why did I leave it? Do you want me to tell the truth, now—the real truth? Well then I'll tell you the real truth. I got drunk—you asked me for the real truth, and now you've got it. I've been a miner all my life, and been engaged in all the great public works. I call a miner a man as can sink a shaft in anything, barring he's not stopped by water. I've got a wife and two children. I left them at Castleton. They're all right. I left them some money. I've worked in eighteen inches o' coal. I mean in a chamber only eighteen inches wide. You lay on your side and pick like this. (Here he threw himself on the floor, and imitated the action of a coal-miner with his pick.) I've worked under young Mr. Brunel very often. He were not at all a gentleman unlike you, sir, only he were darker. My last wages was six shilling a-day. I expect soon to be in work again, for I know lots o' miners in London, and I know where they want hands. I could get a bed and a shilling this minute if I knew where my mates lived; but to-day, when I got to the place where they work, they'd gone home, and I couldn't find out in what part of London they lived. We miners always assist each other, when we're on the road. I've worked in lead and copper, sir, as well as coal, and have been a very good man in my time. I am just forty year old, and I think I've used myself too much when I were young. I knows the Cornish mines well. I'm sure to get work in the course of the week, for I'm well known to many on 'em up at Notting Hill. I once worked in a mine where there were a pressure of fifty pound to the square foot of air. You have to take your time about everything you do there—you can't work hard in a place like that. Thank you, sir, much obliged to you."

One evening in the parish of Marylebone an old man who was selling lucifer-matches put his finger to his forehead, and offered me a box. "Ha'penny a box, sir," he said.

I told him to follow me; an old woman also accompanied us. He made the following statement:—

"My name is John Wood—that's my wife. I am sixty-five years of age; she's seventy-five—ten years older than I am. I kept a shop round this street, sir, four-and-twenty years. I've got a settlement in this parish, but we neither of us like to go into the union—they'd separate us, and we like to be together for the little time we shall be here. The reason we went to the bad was, I took a shop at Woolwich, and the very week I opened it, I don't know how many hundred men were not discharged from the Arsenal and Dockyard. I lost £350 there; after that we tried many things; but everything failed. This is not a living. I stood four hours last night, and took twopence-ha'penny. We lodge in Warde's Buildings. We pay one and ninepence a-week. We've got sticks of our own,—that is a bed, and a table. We are both of us half-starved. It is hard—very hard. I'm as weak as a rat, and so is my wife. We've tried to do something better, but we can't. If I could get some of the folks that once knew me to assist me, I might buy a few things, and make a living out of them. We've been round to 'em to ask 'em, but they don't seem inclined to help us. People don't, sir, when you're poor. I used to feel that myself one time, but I know better now. Good night, sir, and thank you."

In the same neighbourhood I saw an elderly man who looked as if he would beg of me if he dared. I turned round to look at him, and saw that his eyes were red as if with crying, and that he carried a rag in his hand with which he kept dabbing them. I gave him a few pence.

"Thank you, sir," he said; "God bless you. Excuse me, sir, but my eyes is bad—I suffer from the erysipelas—that is what brought me to this. Kindness rather overcomes me—I've not been much used to it of late."

He made the following statement:

"I have been a gentleman's servant, sir, but I lost my place through the erysipelas. I was mad with it, and confined in Bedlam for four years. The last place I was in service at was Sir H—H—'s (he mentioned the name of an eminent banker). Sir H— was very kind to me. I clean his door-plate now, for which I get a shilling a-week—that's all the dependence I have now. The servants behave bad to me. Sir H— said that I was to go into the kitchen now and then; but they never give me anything. I don't get half enough to eat, and it makes me very weak. I'm weak enough naturally, and going without makes me worse. I lodge over in West-

minster. I pay threepence a-night, or eighteenpence a-week. There are three others in the same room as me. I hold horses sometimes, and clean knives and forks when I can get it to do; but people like younger men than me to do odd jobs. I can't do things quick enough, and I'm so nervous that I ain't handy. I can go into the workhouse, and I think I shall in the winter; but the confinement of it is terrible to me. I'd like to keep out of it if I can. My shilling a-week don't pay my rent, and I find it very hard to get on at all. Nobody can tell what I go through. I suppose I must go into the workhouse at last. They're not over kind to you when you're in. Every day the first thing I try to get is the threepence for my lodging. I pay nightly, then I don't have anything to pay on Sundays. I don't know any trade; gentlemen's servants never do. I used to have the best of everything when I was in service. God bless you, sir, and thank you. I'm very much obliged to you.

DISASTER BEGGARS.

This class of street beggars includes shipwrecked mariners, blown-up miners, burnt-out tradesmen, and lucifer droppers. The majority of them are impostors, as is the case with all beggars who pursue begging pertinaciously and systematically. There are no doubt genuine cases to be met with, but they are very few, and they rarely obtrude themselves. Of the shipwrecked mariners I have already given examples under the head of Naval and Military Beggars. Another class of them, to which I have not referred, is familiar to the London public in connection with rudely executed paintings representing either a shipwreck, or more commonly the destruction of a boat by a whale in the North Seas. This painting they spread upon the pavement, fixing it at the corners, if the day be windy, with stones. There are generally two men in attendance, and in most cases one of the two has lost an arm or a leg. Occasionally both of them have the advantage of being deprived of either one or two limbs. Their misfortune so far is not to be questioned. A man who has lost both arms, or even one, is scarcely in a position to earn his living by labour, and is therefore a fit object for charity. It is found, however, that in most instances the stories of their misfortunes printed underneath their pictures are simply inventions, and very often the pretended sailor has never been to sea at all. In one case which I specially investigated, the man had been a bricklayer, and had broken both his arms

by falling from a scaffold. He received some little compensation at the time, but when that was spent he went into the streets to beg, carrying a paper on his breast describing the cause of his misfortune. His first efforts were not successful. His appearance (dressed as he was in workman's clothes) was not sufficiently picturesque to attract attention, and his story was of too ordinary a kind to excite much interest. He had a very hard life of it for some length of time; for, in addition to the drawback arising from the uninteresting nature of his case, he had had no experience in the art of begging, and his takings were barely sufficient to procure bread. From this point I will let him tell his own story:—

A SHIPWRECKED MARINER.

"I had only taken a penny all day, and I had had no breakfast, and I spent the penny in a loaf. I was three nights behind for my lodging, and I knew the door would be shut in my face if I did not take home sixpence. I thought I would go to the workhouse, and perhaps I might get a supper and a lodging for that night. I was in Tottenham Court-road by the chapel, and it was past ten o'clock. The people were thinning away, and there seemed no chance of anything. So says I to myself I'll start down the New Road to the workhouse. I knew there was a workhouse down that way, for I worked at a 'ouse next it once, and I used to think the old paupers looked comfortable like. It came across me all at once, that I one time said to one of my mates, as we was sitting on the scaffold, smoking our pipes, and looking over the workhouse wall, 'Jem, them old chaps there seems to do it pretty tidy; they have their soup and bread, and a bed to lie on, and their bit o' baccy, and they comes out o' a arternoon and baskes in the sun, and has their chat, and don't seem to do no work to hurt 'em.' And Jem he says, 'it's a great hinstitooshin, Enery,' says he, for you see Jem was a bit of a scollard, and could talk just like a book. 'I don't know about a hinstitooshin, Jem,' says I, 'but what I does know is that a man might do wuss nor goe in there and have his grub and his baccy regular, without nought to stress him, like them old chaps.' Somehow or other that 'ere conversation came across me, and off I started to the workhouse. When I came to the gate I saw a lot of poor women and children sitting on the pavement round it. They couldn't have been hungrier than me, but they were awful ragged, and their case looked wuss.

I didn't like to go in among them, and I watched a while a little way off. One woman kep on ringing the bell for a long time, and nobody came, and then she got desperate, and kep a-pulling and ringing like she was mad, and at last a fat man came out and swore at her and drove them all away. I didn't think there was much chance for me if they druv away women and kids, and such as them, but I thought I would try as I was a cripple, and had lost both my arms. So I stepped across the road, and was just agoing to try and pull the bell with my two poor stumps when some one tapped me on the shoulder. I turned round and saw it was a sailor-like man, without ne'er an arm like myself, only his were cut off short at the shoulder. 'What are you agoing to do?' says he. 'I was agoing to try and ring the workhouse bell,' says I. 'What for?' says he. 'To ask to be took in,' says I. And then the sailor man looks at me in a steady kind of way, and says, 'Want to get into the workhouse, and you got ne'er an arm? Your'e a infant,' says he. 'If you had only lost one on 'em now, I could forgive you, but—' 'But surely,' says I, 'it's a greater misfortune to lose two nor one; half a loaf's better nor no bread, they say.' 'You're a infant,' says he again. 'One off aint no good; both on 'em's the thing. Have you a mind to earn a honest living,' says he, quite sharp. 'I have,' says I; 'anything for a honest crust.' 'Then,' says he, 'come along o' me.' So I went with the sailor man to his lodging in Whitechapel, and a very tidy place it was, and we had beef-steaks and half a gallon o' beer, and a pipe, and then he told me what he wanted me to do. I was to dress like him in a sailor's jacket and trousers and a straw 'at, and stand o' one side of a picture of a shipwreck, vile he stood on the 'tother. And I consented, and he learned me some sailors' patter, and at the end of the week he got me the togs, and then I went out with him. We did only middlin the first day, but after a bit the coppers tumbled in like winkin'. It was so affectin' to see two mariners without ne'er an arm between them, and we had crowds round us. At the end of the week we shared two pound and seven shillings, which was more nor a pound than my mate ever did by his self. He always said it was pilin' the hagony to have two without ne'er an arm. My mate used to say to me, 'Enery, if your stumps had only been a trifle shorter, we might ha' made a fortun by this time; but you waggle them, you see, and that frightens the old ladies.' I did well when Trafalgar

Jack was alive. That was my mate, sir; but he died of the cholera, and I joined another pal who had a wooden leg; but he was rough to the kids, and got us both into trouble. How do I mean rough to the kids? Why, you see, the kids used to swarm round us to look at the pictur just like flies round a sugar-cask, and that crabbed the business. My mate got savage with them sometimes, and clouted their heads, and one day the mother o' one o' the brats came up a-screaming awful and give Timber Bill, as we called him, into custody, and he was committed for a rogue and vagabond. Timber Bill went into the nigger line arterwards and did well. You may have seen him, sir. He plays the tambourine, and dances, and the folks laugh at his wooden leg, and the coppers come in in style. Yes, I'm still in the old line, but it's a bad business now."

BLOWN-UP MINERS.

These are simply a variety of the large class of beggars who get their living in the streets, chiefly by frequenting public-houses and whining a tale of distress. The impostors among them—and they are by far the greater number—do not keep up the character of blown-up miners all the year round, but time the assumption to suit some disaster which may give colour to their tale. After a serious coal-mine accident "blown-up miners" swarm in such numbers all over the town that one might suppose the whole of the coal-hands of the north had been blown south by one explosion. The blown-up miner has the general appearance of a navy; he wears moleskin trousers turned up nearly to the knees, a pair of heavy-laced boots, a sleeved waistcoat, and commonly a shapeless felt hat of the wide-awake fashion. He wears his striped shirt open at the neck, showing a weather-browned and brawny chest. The state of his hands and the colour of his skin show that he has been accustomed to hard work, but his healthy look and fresh colour give the lie direct to his statement that he has spent nearly the whole of his life in working in the dark many hundred feet beneath the surface of the earth. Many of them do not pretend that they have been injured by the explosion of the mine, but only that they have been thrown out of work. These are mostly excavators and bricklayers' labourers, who are out of employ in consequence of a stoppage of the works on which they have been engaged, or more often, as I have proved by inquiry, in consequence of their own misconduct in getting drunk and absenting

themselves from their labour. These impostors are easily detected. If you cross-question them as to the truth of their stories, and refer to names and places which they ought to be acquainted with if their representations were genuine, they become insolent and move away from you. There are others, however, who are more artful, and whose tales are borne out by every external appearance, and also by a complete knowledge of the places whence they pretend to have come. These men, though sturdy and horny-fisted, have a haggard, pallid look, which seems to accord well with the occupation of the miner. They can converse about mining operations, they describe minutely the incidents of the accident by which they suffered, and they have the names of coal-owners and gangsmen ever ready on their tongues. In addition to this they bare some part of their bodies—the leg or the arm—and show you what looks like a huge scald or burn. These are rank impostors, denizens of Wentworth-street and Bricklane, and who were never nearer to Yorkshire than Mile-end gate in their lives. Having met with one or two specimens of "real" distressed miners, I can speak with great certainty of the characteristics which mark out the impostor. For many years past there has always been an abundance of work for miners and navigators; indeed the labour of the latter has often been at a premium; cases of distress arise among them only from two causes—ill-health and bodily disaster. If they are in health and found begging it is invariably during a long journey from one part of the country to another. The look and manner of these miners forbids the idea of their being systematic mendicants or impostors. They want something to help them on the road, and they will be as grateful for a hunck of bread and cheese as for money. If you cross-question these men they never show an uncomfortable sense of being under examination, but answer you frankly as if you were merely holding a friendly conversation with them. Miners are very charitable to each other, and they think it no shame to seek aid of their betters when they really need it. Of the device called the "scaldrum dodge," by which beggars of this class produce artificial sores, I shall have to treat by-and-bye.

BURNT-OUT TRADESMEN.

With many begging impostors the assumption of the "burnt-out tradesman" is simply a change of character to suit circumstances; with others it is a fixed and

settled rôle. The burnt-out tradesman does not beg in the streets by day; he comes out at night, and his favourite haunts are the private bars of public-houses frequented by good company. In the day-time he begs by a petition, which he leaves at the houses of charitable persons with an intimation that he will call again in an hour. In the evening he is made up for his part. He lurks about a public-house until he sees a goodly company assembled in the private bar, and then, when the "gents," as he calls them, appear to be getting happy and comfortable, he suddenly appears among them, and moves them by the striking contrast which his personal appearance and condition offers to theirs. Like many others of his class he has studied human nature to some purpose, and he knows at a glance the natures with which he has to deal. Noisy and thoughtless young men, like clerks and shopmen, he avoids. They are generally too much occupied with themselves to think of him or his misfortunes; and having had no experience of a responsible position, the case of a reduced tradesman does not come home to them. A quiet and sedate company of middle-aged tradesmen best suits his purpose. They know the difficulties and dangers of trade, and maybe there are some of them who are conscious that ruin is impending over themselves. To feeling men of this class it is a terrible shock to see a man, who has once been well-to-do like themselves, reduced to get a living by begging. The burnt-out tradesman's appearance gives peculiar force to his appeal. He is dressed in a suit of black, greasy and thread-bare, which looks like the last shreds of the dress suit which he wore on high days and holidays, when he was thriving and prosperous. His black satin stock, too, is evidently a relict of better days. His hat is almost napless; but it is well brushed—indicating care and neatness on the part of its owner. His shoes are mere shapeless envelopes of leather, but the uppers are carefully polished, and the strings neatly tied. When the burnt-out tradesman enters a bar he allows his appearance to have its due effect before he opens his mouth, or makes any other demonstration whatever. In this he seems to imitate the practice of the favourite comedian, who calculates upon being able to bespeak the favour of his audience by merely showing his face. The beggar, after remaining motionless for a moment, to allow the company fully to contemplate his miserable appearance, suddenly and

unexpectedly advances one of his hands, which until now has been concealed behind his coat, and exposes to view a box of matches. Nothing can surpass the artistic skill of this mute appeal. The respectable look, and the poor, worn clothes, first of all—the patient, broken-hearted glance accompanied by a gentle sigh—and then the box of matches! What need of a word spoken. Can you not read the whole history? Once a prosperous tradesman, the head of a family, surrounded by many friends. Now, through misfortune, cast out of house and home, deserted by his friends, and reduced to wander the streets and sell matches to get his children bread. Reduced to sell paltry matches! he who was in a large way once, and kept clerks to register his wholesale transactions! It is seldom that this artist requires to speak. No words will move men who can resist so powerful an appeal. When he does speak he does not require to say more than—"I am an unfortunate tradesman, who lost everything I possessed in the world by a disastrous fire—" Here the halfpence interrupt his story, and he has no need to utter another word, except to mutter his humble thanks.

There are a great many beggars of this class, and they nearly all pursue the same method. They are most successful among tradesmen of the middle class, and among the poor working people. One of them told me that the wives of working men were, according to his experience, the most tender-hearted in London. "The upper classes, the swells, aint no good," he said; "they subscribe to the Mendicity Society, and they thinks every beggar an imposture. The half-and-half swells, shopmen and the likes, aint got no hearts, and they aint got no money, and what's the good. Tradesmen that aint over well off have a fellow feeling; but the workmen's wives out a-marketing of a Saturday night are no trouble. They always carries coppers—change out of sixpence or a something—in their hands, and when I goes in where they are a havin' their daffies—that's drops o' gin, sir—they looks at me, and says, 'Poor man!' and drops the coppers, whatever it is, into my hand, and p'raps asks me to have a half-pint o' beer besides. They're good souls, the workmen's wives." There is a well-known beggar of this class who dresses in a most unexceptionable manner. His black clothes are new and glossy, his hat and boots are good, and to heighten the effect he wears a spotless white choker. He is known at the west end by the name of the "Bishop of

London." His aspect is decidedly clerical. He has a fat face, a double chin, his hat turns up extensively at the brim, and, as I have said, he wears a white neck-cloth. When he enters a bar the company imagine that he is about to order a bottle of champagne at least; but when he looks round and produces the inevitable box of matches, the first impression gives way either to compassion or extreme wonder. So far as my experience serves me, this dodge is not so successful as the one I have just described. A person with the most ordinary reasoning powers must know that a man who possesses clothes like those need not be in want of bread; but if the power of reasoning were universally allotted to mankind, there would be a poor chance for the professional beggar. There never was a time or place in which there were not to be found men anxious to avoid labour, and yet to live in ease and enjoyment, and there never was a time in which other men were not, from their sympathy, their fears, or their superstition, ready to assist the necessitous, or those who appeared to be so, and liable to be imposed upon or intimidated, according as the beggar is crafty or bold.

As a rule the burnt-out tradesmen whom I have described are impostors, who make more by begging than many of those who relieve them earn by hard and honest labour. The petitions which they leave at houses are very cleverly drawn out. They are generally the composition of the professional screevers, whose practices I shall have to describe by-and-by. They have a circumstantial account of the fire by which the applicant "lost his all," and sometimes furnish an inventory of the goods that were destroyed. They are attested by the names of clergymen, churchwardens, and other responsible persons, whose signatures are imitated with consummate art in every variety of ink. Some specimens of these petitions and begging letters will be found under the head of "Dependants of Beggars."

LUCIFER DROPPERS.

The lucifer droppers are impostors to a man—to a boy—to a girl. Men seldom, if ever, practise this "dodge." It is children's work; and the artful way in which boys and girls of tender years pursue it, shows how systematically the seeds of mendicancy and crime are implanted in the hearts of the young Arab tribes of London. The artfulness of this device is of the most diabolical kind; for it trades not alone upon deception, but upon exciting sym-

pathy with the guilty at the expense of the innocent. A boy or a girl takes up a position on the pavement of a busy street, such as Cheapside or the Strand. He, or she—it is generally a girl—carries a box or two of lucifer matches, which she offers for sale. In passing to and fro she artfully contrives to get in the way of some gentleman who is hurrying along. He knocks against her and upsets the matches which fall in the mud. The girl immediately begins to cry and howl. The bystanders, who are ignorant of the trick, exclaim in indignation against the gentleman who has caused a poor girl such serious loss, and the result is that either the gentleman, to escape being hooted, or the ignorant passers-by, in false compassion, give the girl money. White peppermint lozenges are more often used than lucifers. It looks a hopeless case, indeed, when a trayful of white lozenges fall in the mud.

BODILY AFFLICTED BEGGARS.

Beggars who excite charity by exhibiting sores and bodily deformities are not so commonly to be met with in London as they were some years ago. The officers of the Mendicity Society have cleared the streets of nearly all the impostors, and the few who remain are blind men and cripples. Many of the blind men are under the protection of a Society, which furnishes them with books printed in raised type which they decipher by the touch. Others provide their own books, and are allowed to sit on door steps or in the recesses of the bridges without molestation from the police. It has been found on inquiry that these afflicted persons are really what they appear to be—poor, helpless, blind creatures, who are totally incapacitated from earning a living, and whom it would be heartless cruelty to drive into the workhouse, where no provision is made for their peculiar wants.

The bodily afflicted beggars of London exhibit seven varieties. 1. Those having real or pretended sores, vulgarly known as the "Scaldrum Dodge." 2. Having swollen legs. 3. Being crippled, deformed, maimed, or paralyzed. 4. Being blind. 5. Being subject to fits. 6. Being in a decline. 7. "Shallow Coves," or those who exhibit themselves in the streets, half-clad, especially in cold weather.

First, then, as to those having real or pretended sores. As I have said, there are few beggars of this class left. When the officers of the Mendicity Society first directed their attention to the suppression of this form of mendicancy, it was found

that the great majority of those who exhibit sores were unmitigated impostors. In nearly all the cases investigated the sores did not proceed from natural causes, but were either wilfully produced or simulated. A few had lacerated their flesh in reality; but the majority had resorted to the less painful operation known as the "Scaldrum Dodge." This consists in covering a portion of the leg or arm with soap to the thickness of a plaister, and then saturating the whole with vinegar. The vinegar causes the soap to blister and assume a festering appearance, and thus the passer-by is led to believe that the beggar is suffering from a real sore. So well does this simple device simulate a sore that the deception is not to be detected even by close inspection. The "Scaldrum Dodge" is a trick of very recent introduction among the London beggars. It is a concomitant of the advance of science and the progress of the art of adulteration. It came in with penny postage, daguerreotypes, and other modern innovations of a like description. In less scientific periods within the present century it was wholly unknown; and sores were produced by burns and lacerations which the mendicants inflicted upon themselves with a ruthless hand. An old man who has been a beggar all his life, informed me that he had known a man prick the flesh of his leg all over, in order to produce blood and give the appearance of an ulcerous disease. This man is a cripple and walks about upon crutches, selling stay laces. He is now upwards of seventy years of age. At my solicitation he made the following statement without any apparent reserve.

SEVENTY YEARS A BEGGAR.

"I have been a beggar ever since I was that high—ever since I could walk. No, I was not born a cripple. I was thirty years of age before I broke my leg. That was an accident. A horse and cart drove over me in Westminster. Well; yes I was drunk. I was able-bodied enough before that. I was turned out to beg by my mother. My father, I've heard, was a soldier; he went to Egypt, or some foreign part, and never came back. I never was learnt any trade but begging, and I couldn't turn my hand to nothing else. I might have been learnt the shoemaking; but what was the use? Begging was a better trade then; it isn't now though. There was fine times when the French war was on. I lived in Westminster then. A man as they called Copenhagen Jack, took a fancy to me, and made me his valet. I

waited upon, fetched his drink, and so forth. Copenhagen Jack was a captain; no not in the army, nor in the navy neither. He was the captain of the Pye-Street beggars. There was nigh two hundred of them lived in two large houses, and Jack directed them. Jack's word was law, I assure you. The boys—Jack called them his boys, but there was old men among them, and old women too—used to come up before the captain every morning before starting out for the day, to get their orders. The captain divided out the districts for them, and each man took his beat according to his directions. It was share and share alike, with an extra for the captain. There was all manner of "lays;" yes, cripples and darkies. We called them as did the blind dodge, darkies,—and "shakers" them as had fits,—and shipwrecked mariners, and—the scaldrum dodge, no; that's new; but I know what you mean. They did the real thing then—scrape the skin off their feet with a bit of glass until the blood came. Those were fine times for beggars. I've known many of 'em bring in as much as thirty shillings a day, some twenty, some fifteen. If a man brought home no more than five or six shillings, the captain would enter him, make a note of him, and change his beat. Yes, we lived well. I've known fifty sit down to a splendid supper, geese and turkeys, and all that, and keep it up until daylight, with songs and toasts. No; I didn't beg then; but I did before, and I did after. I begged after, when the captain came to misfortune. He went a walking one day in his best clothes, and got pressed, and never came back, and there was a mutiny among them in Pye-Street, and I nearly got murdered. You see, they were jealous of me, because the captain petted me. I used to dress in top-boots and a red coat when I waited on the captain. It was his fancy. Romancing? I don't know what you mean. Telling lies, oh! It's true by—. There's nothing like it nowadays. The new police and this b—Mendicity Society has spoilt it all. Well, they skinned me; took off my fine coat and boots, and sent me out on the orphan lay in tatters. I sat and cried all day on the door steps, for I was really miserable now my friend was gone, and I got lots of halfpence, and silver too, and when I took home the swag, they danced round me and swore that they would elect me captain if I went on like that; but there was a new captain made, and when they had their fun out, he came and took the money away, and kicked me

under the table. I ran away the next day, and went to a house in St. Giles's, where I was better treated. There was no captain there; the landlord managed the house, and nobody was master but him. There was nigh a hundred beggars in that house, and some two or three hundred more in the houses next it. The houses are not standing now. They were taken down when New Oxford-street was built; they stood on the north side. Yes; we lived well in St. Giles's—as well as we did in Westminster. I have earned 8, 10, 15, ay, 30 shillings a day, and more nor that sometimes. I can't earn one shilling now. The folks don't give as they did. They think every body an imposture now. And then the police won't let you alone. No; I told you before, I never was anything else but a beggar. How could I? It was the trade I was brought up to. A man must follow his trade. No doubt I shall die a beggar, and the parish will bury me."

HAVING SWOLLEN LEGS.

Beggars who lie on the pavement and expose swollen legs, are very rarely to be met with now. The imposture has been entirely suppressed by the police and the officers of the Mendicity Society. This is one of the shallowest of all the many "dodges" of the London beggars. On reflection any one, however slightly acquainted with the various forms of disease, must know that a mere swelling cannot be a normal or chronic condition of the human body. A swelling might last a few days, or a week; but a swelling of several years' standing is only to be referred to the continued application of a poisonous ointment, or to the binding of the limb with ligatures, so as to confine the blood and puff the skin.

CRIPPLES.

Various kinds of cripples are still to be found, begging in the streets of London. As a rule the police do not interfere with them, unless they know them to be impostors. A certain number of well-known cripples have acquired a sort of prescriptive right to beg where they please. The public will be familiar with the personal appearance of many of them. There is the tall man on crutches, with his foot in a sling, who sells stay laces; the poor wretch without hands, who crouches on the pavement and writes with the stumps of his arms; the crab-like man without legs, who sits strapped to a board, and walks upon his hands; the legless man who propels himself in a little carriage, con-

structed on the velocipede principle; the idiotic-looking youth, who "stands pad with a fakement," shaking in every limb as if he were under the influence of galvanism. These mendicants are not considered to be impostors, and are allowed to pursue begging as a regular calling. I cannot think, however, that the police exercise a wise discretion in permitting some of the more hideous of these beggars to infest the streets. Instances are on record of nervous females having been seriously frightened, and even injured, by seeing men without legs or arms crawling at their feet. A case is within my own knowledge, where the sight of a man without legs or arms had such an effect upon a lady in the family way that her child was born in all respects the very counterpart of the object that alarmed her. It had neither legs nor arms. This occurrence took place at Brighton about eleven years ago. I have frequently seen ladies start and shudder when the crab-like man I have referred to has suddenly appeared, hopping along at their feet. I am surprised that there is no home or institution for cripples of this class. They are certainly deserving of sympathy and aid; for they are utterly incapacitated from any kind of labour. Impostors are constantly starting up among this class of beggars; but they do not remain long undetected. A man was lately found begging, who pretended that he had lost his right arm. The deception at the first glance was perfect. His right sleeve hung loose at his side, and there appeared to be nothing left of his arm but a short stump. On being examined at the police office, his arm was found strapped to his side, and the stump turned out to be a stuffing of bran. Another man simulated a broken leg by doubling up that limb and strapping his foot and ankle to his thigh. Paralysis is frequently simulated with success until the actor is brought before the police surgeon, when the cheat is immediately detected.

A BLIND BEGGAR.

A blind beggar, led by a dog, whom I accosted in the street, made the following voluntary statement. I should mention that he seemed very willing to answer my questions, and while he was talking kept continually feeling my clothes with his finger and thumb. The object of this, I fancy, must have been to discover whether I was what persons of his class call a "gentleman" or a poor man. Whether he had any thoughts of my being an officer I cannot say.

"I am sixty years of age: you wouldn't think it, perhaps, but I am. No, I was not born blind; I lost my sight in the small-pox, five and twenty years ago. I have been begging on the streets eighteen years. Yes, my dog knows the way home. How did I teach him that? why, when I had him first, the cabmen and busmen took him out to Camden Town, and Westminster, and other places, and then let him go. He soon learnt to find his way home. No, he is not the dog I had originally; that one died; he was five and twenty years old when he died. Yes, that was a very old age for a dog. I had this one about five years ago. Don't get as much as I used to do? No, no, my friend. I make about a shilling a-day, never—scarcely never—more, sometimes less—a good deal less; but some folks are very kind to me. I live at Poole's-place, Mount Pleasant. There are a good many engineers about there, and their wives are very kind to me; they have always a halfpenny for me when I go that way. I have my beats. I don't often come down this way (Gower-street), only once a month. I always keep on this side of Tottenham Court-road; I never go over the road; my dog knows that. I am going down there," (pointing); "that's Chenies-street. Oh, I know where I am: next turning to the right is Alfred-street, the next to the left is Francis-street, and when I get to the end of that the dog will stop; but I know as well as him. Yes, he's a good dog, but never the dog I used to have; he used always to stop when there was anybody near, and pull when there was nobody. He was what I call a steady dog, this one is young and foolish like; he stops sometimes dead, and I goes on talking, thinking there is a lady or gentleman near; but it's only other dogs that he's stopping to have a word with. No, no, no, sir." This he said when I dropped some more coppers into his hat, having previously given him a penny. "I don't want that. I think I know your voice, sir; I'm sure I've heard it before. No! ah, then I'm mistaken." Here again he felt my coat and waistcoat with an inquiring touch: apparently satisfied, he continued, "I'll tell you, sir, what I wouldn't tell to every one; I've as nice a little place at Mount Pleasant as you would desire to see. You wouldn't think I was obliged to beg if you saw it. Why, sir, I beg many times when I've as much as sixteen shillings in my pocket; leastwise not in my pocket, but at home. Why you see, sir, there's the winter months coming on, and I lays by what I can against the wet days, when I can't go

out. There's no harm in that, sir. Well, now, sir, I'll tell you: there's a man up there in Sussex-street that I know, and he said to me just now, as I was passing the public house, 'Come in, John, and have a drop of something.' 'No, thank ye,' says I, 'I don't want drink; if you want to give me anything give me the money.' 'No,' says he, 'I won't do that, but if you come in and have something to drink I'll give you sixpence.' Well, sir, I wouldn't go. It wouldn't do, you know, for the likes of me, a blind man getting his living by begging, to be seen in a public-house; the people wouldn't know, sir, whether it was my money that was paying for it or not. I never go into a public-house; I has my drop at home. Oh, yes, I am tired—tired of it; but I'll tell you, sir, I think I'll get out of it soon. Do you know how that is, sir? Well, I think I shall get on to Day and Martin's Charity in October; I'm promised votes, and I'm in hopes this time. God bless you, sir."

There was for many years in the city a blind man with a dog, who was discovered to be a rank impostor. The boys found it out long before the police did. They used to try and take the money out of the little basket that the dog carried in his mouth, but they never succeeded. The moment a boy approached the basket the blind man ran at him with his stick, which proved, of course, that the fellow could see. Some of my readers may recollect seeing in the papers an account of a respectable young girl who ran away from her home and took up with this blind man. She cohabited with him, in fact, and it was found that they lived in extravagance and luxury on the blind beggar's daily takings.

BEGGARS SUBJECT TO FITS

are impostors, I may say, wholly without exception. Some of them are the associates and agents of thieves, and fall down in the street in assumed fits in order to collect a crowd and afford a favourable opportunity to the pickpockets, with whom they are in league. The simulation of fits is no mean branch of the beggar's art of deception. The various symptoms—the agitation of the muscles, the turning up of the whites of the eyes, the pallor of the face and the rigidity of the mouth and jaw—are imitated to a nicety; and these symptoms are sometimes accompanied by copious frothing at the mouth. I asked Mr. Horsford, of the Mendicity Society, how this was done, and received the laconic answer—"Soap." And this brought to my memory that I had once seen an actor charge his mouth with

a small piece of soap to give due *vraisemblance* to the last scene of *Sir Giles Overreach*. I was shown an old woman who was in the habit of falling down in assumed fits simply to get brandy. She looked very aged and poor, and I was told she generally had her fits when some well-dressed gentleman was passing with a lady on his arm. She generally chose the scene of her performance close to the door of a public-house, into which some compassionate person might conveniently carry her. She was never heard to speak in her fits except to groan and mutter "brandy," when that remedy did not appear to suggest itself to those who came to her aid. An officer said to me, "I have known that old woman have so many fits in the course of the day that she has been found lying in the gutter dead drunk from the effect of repeated restoratives. She has been apprehended and punished over and over again, but she returns to the old dodge the minute she gets out. She is on the parish; but she gets money as well as brandy by her shamming."

I have heard that there are persons who purposely fall into the Serpentine in order to be taken to the receiving-house of the Humane Society, and recovered with brandy. One man repeated the trick so often that at last the Society's men refused to go to his aid. It is needless to say that he soon found his way out of the water unaided, when he saw that his dodge was detected.

BEING IN A DECLINE.

No form of poverty and misfortune is better calculated to move the hearts of the compassionate than this. You see crouching in a corner, a pale-faced, wan young man, apparently in the very last stage of consumption. His eyes are sunk in his head, his jaw drops, and you can almost see his bones through his pallid skin. He appears too exhausted to speak; he coughs at intervals, and places his hand on his chest as if in extreme pain. After a fit of coughing he pants pitifully, and bows his head feebly as if he were about to die on the spot. It will be noticed, however, as a peculiarity distinguishing nearly all these beggars, that the sufferers wear a white cloth bound round their heads overtopped by a black cap. It is this white cloth, coupled with a few slight artistic touches of colour to the face, that produces the interesting look of decline. Any person who is thin and of sallow complexion may produce the same effect by putting on a white night-cap, and applying a little pink colour round the eyes. It is the simple rule observed by comedians, when they make up for a sick man or a

ghost. These beggars are all impostors; and they are now so well known to the police that they never venture to take up a fixed position during the day, but pursue their nefarious calling at night at public-houses and other resorts where they can readily make themselves scarce should an officer happen to spy them out.

"SHALLOW COVES."

This is the slang name given to beggars who exhibit themselves in the streets half clad, especially in cold weather. There are a great many of these beggars in London, and they are enabled to ply their trade upon the sympathies of the public with very little check, owing to the fact that they mostly frequent quiet streets, and make a point of moving on whenever they see a policeman approaching. A notorious "shallow cove," who frequents the neighbourhood of the Strand and St. Martin's Lane, must be well known to many of my readers. His practice is to stand at the windows of bakers and confectioners, and gaze with an eager famished look at the bread and other eatables. His almost naked state, his hollow, glaring eye, like that of a famished dog, his long thin cheek, his matted hair, his repeated shrugs of uneasiness as if he were suffering from cold or vermin, present such a spectacle of wretchedness as the imagination could never conceive. He has no shirt, as you can see by his open breast; his coat is a thing of mere shreds; his trousers, torn away in picturesque jags at the knees, are his only other covering, except a dirty sodden-looking round-crowned brown felt hat, which he slouches over his forehead in a manner which greatly heightens his aspect of misery. I was completely taken in when I first saw this man greedily glaring in at a baker's window in St. Martin's Lane. I gave him twopence to procure a loaf, and waited to see him buy it, anxious to have the satisfaction of seeing him appease such extreme hunger as I had never—I thought—witnessed before. He did not enter the shop with the alacrity I expected. He seemed to hesitate, and presently I could see that he was casting stealthy glances at me. I remained where I was, watching him; and at last when he saw I was determined to wait, he entered the shop. I saw him speak to the woman at the counter and point at something; but he made no purchase, and came out without the bread, which I thought he would have devoured like a wolf, when he obtained the money to procure it. Seeing me still watching him, he moved away rapidly. I entered the

shop, and asked if he had bought anything. "Not he, he don't want any bread," said the mistress of the shop, "I wish the police would lock him up, or drive him away from here, for he's a regular nuisance. He pretends to be hungry, and then when people give him anything, he comes in here and asks if I can sell him any bits. He knows I won't, and he don't want 'em. He is a regular old soldier, he is, sir."

I received confirmation of this account from Mr. Horsford, who said that the fellow had been sent to prison at least thirty times. The moment he gets out he resorts to his old practices. On one occasion, when he was taken, he had thirteen shillings in his pocket,—in coppers, sixpences and threepenny and fourpenny bits. Soft-hearted old ladies who frequent the pastry-cooks are his chief victims.

"Shallow coves" have recently taken to Sunday begging. They go round the quiet streets in pairs, and sing psalm tunes during church hours. They walk barefooted, without hats, and expose their breasts to show that they have no under clothing.

The "shallow cove" is a very pitiable sight in winter, standing half naked, with his bare feet on the cold stones. But give him a suit of clothes and shoes and stockings, and the next day he will be as naked and as wretched-looking as he is to-day. Nakedness and shivers are his stock in trade.

FAMISHED BEGGARS.

The famished beggars, that is, those who "make up" to look as if they were starving, pursue an infinite variety of dodges. The most common of all is to stand in some prominent place with a placard on the breast, bearing an inscription to the effect that the beggar is "starving," or that he has "a large family entirely dependent upon him." The appeal is sometimes made more forcible by its brevity, and the card bears the single word, "Destitute." In every case where the beggar endeavours to convey starvation by his looks and dress it may be relied upon that he is an impostor, a lazy fellow, who prefers begging to work, because it requires less exertion and brings him more money. There are some, however,—blind men and old persons—who "stand pad," that is to say, beg by the exhibition of a written or printed paper, who are not impostors; they are really poor persons who are incapacitated from work, and who beg from day to day to earn a living. But these beggars do not get up an appearance of being starved, and indeed some of them look very fat and comfortable.

The beggars who chalk on the pavement "I am starving," in a round scholastic hand, are not of this class. It does not require much reflection to discern the true character of such mendicants. As I have frequently had occasion to observe, the man who begs day after day, and counts his gains at the rate of from twelve to twenty shillings a week, cannot be starving. You pass one of these beggars in the morning, and you hear the coppers chinking on the pavement as they are thrown to him by the thoughtless or the credulous; you pass him again in the evening, and there is still the inscription "I am starving." This beggar adds hypocrisy to his other vices. By his writing on the pavement he would give you to understand that he is too much ashamed to beg by word of mouth. As he crouches beside his inscription he hides his head. The writing, too, is a false pretence. "I am starving" is written in so good a hand that you are led to believe that the wretch before you has had a good education, that he has seen better days, and is now the victim of misfortune, perhaps wholly undeserved. It should be known, however, that many of these beggars cannot write at all; they could not write another sentence except "I am starving" if it were to save their lives. There are persons who teach the art of writing certain sentences to beggars, but their pupils learn to trace the letters mechanically. This is the case with the persons who draw in coloured chalk on the pavement. They can draw a mackerel, a broken plate, a head of Christ, and a certain stereotyped sea-view with a setting sun, but they cannot draw anything else, and these they trace upon a principle utterly unknown to art. There is one beggar of this class who frequents the King's-Cross end of the New Road, who writes his specimens backwards, and who cannot do it any other way. He covers a large flag-stone with "copies" in various hands, and they are all executed in the true "copper-plate" style. They are all, however, written backwards.

The distinction made by the magistrates and the police between those who draw coloured views and those who merely write "I am starving" in white chalk, exhibits a nicety of discrimination which is not a little amusing. When the officers of the Mendicity Society first began to enforce their powers with rigour (in consequence of the alarming increase of mendicancy) they arrested these flag-stone artists with others. The magistrates, however, showed an unwillingness to commit them, and at

length it was laid down as a rule that these men should not be molested unless they obstructed a thoroughfare or created a disturbance. This decision was grounded upon the consideration that these street artists did some actual work for the money they received from the public; they drew a picture and exhibited it, and might therefore be fairly regarded as pursuing an art. So the chalkers of mackerel were placed in the category of privileged street exhibitors. The "I am starving" dodge, however, has been almost entirely suppressed by the persevering activity of Mr. Horsford and his brother officers of the Mendicity Society.

One of the latest devices of famished beggars which has come under my notice I shall denominate

THE CHOKING DODGE.

A wretched-looking man, in a state of semi-nudity, having the appearance of being half starved and exhausted, either from want of food or from having walked a long way, sat down one day on the door-step of the house opposite mine. I was struck by his wretched and forlorn appearance, and particularly by his downcast looks. It seemed as if misery had not only worn him to the bone, but had crushed all his humanity out of him. He was more like a feeble beast, dying of exhaustion and grovelling in the dust, than a man. Presently he took out a crust of dry bread and attempted to eat it. It was easy to see that it was a hard crust, as hard as stone, and dirty, as if it had lain for some days in the street. The wretch gnawed at it as a starved dog gnaws at a bone. The crust was not only hard, but the beggar's jaws seemed to want the power of mastication. It seemed as if he had hungered so long that food was now too late. At length he managed to bite off a piece; but now another phase of his feebleness was manifested—he could not swallow it. He tried to get it down, and it stuck in his throat. You have seen a dog with a bone in his throat, jerking his head up and down in his effort to swallow: that was the action of this poor wretch on the door-step. I could not but be moved by this spectacle, and I opened the window and called to the man. He took no heed of me. I called again. Still no heed; misery had blunted all his faculties. He seemed to desire nothing but to sit there and choke. I went over to him, and, tapping him on the shoulder, gave him twopenny, and told him to go to the public house and get some beer to wash down his hard meal. He rose slowly, gave

me a look of thanks, and went away in the direction of the tavern. He walked more briskly than I could have conceived possible in his case, and something prompted me to watch him. I stood at my door looking after him, and when he got near the public-house he turned round. I knew at once that he was looking to see if I were watching him. The next minute he turned aside as if to enter the public-house. The entrance stood back from the frontage of the street, and I could not tell, from where I stood, whether he had gone into the house or not. I crossed to the other side, where I could see him without being noticed. He had not entered the house, but was standing by the door. When he had stood there for a few minutes he peeped out cautiously, and looked down the street towards the place where he had left me. Being apparently satisfied that all was right, he emerged from the recess and walked on. I was now determined to watch him further. I had not long to wait for conclusive evidence of the imposture which I now more than suspected. The man walked slowly along until he saw some persons at a first-floor window, when he immediately sat down on a door-step opposite and repeated the elaborate performance with the hard crust which I have already described. This I saw him do four times before he left the street, in each case getting money. It is needless to say that this fellow was a rank impostor. One of his class was apprehended some time ago—it might have been this very man—and no less than seven shillings were found upon him. These men frequent quiet bye-streets, and never, or rarely, beg in the busy thoroughfares. I will give another case, which I shall call

THE OFFAL-EATER.

The most notable instance of this variety of the famished beggars which has come under my notice is that of a little old man who frequents the neighbourhood of Russell-square. I have known him now for two years, and I have seen him repeat his performance at least a score of times. The man has the appearance of a cutler. He wears a very old and worn, but not ragged, velveteen coat with large side pockets, a pair of sailor's blue trousers a good deal patched, a very, very bad pair of shoes, and a chimney-pot hat, which seems to have braved the wind and rain for many years, been consigned to a dust-bin, and then recovered for wear. He is below the average height, and appears to be about seventy years of age. This little old man makes

his appearance in my street about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. He walks down the pavement listlessly, rubbing his hands and looking about him on every side in a vacant bewildered manner, as if all the world were strange to him, and he had no home, no friend, and no purpose on the face of the earth. Every now and then he stops and turns his face towards the street, moving himself uneasily in his clothes, as if he were troubled with vermin. All this time he is munching and mumbling some food in a manner suggestive of a total want of teeth. As he pauses he looks about as if in search of something. Presently you see him pick up a small piece of bread which has been thrown out to the sparrows. He wipes it upon his velveteen coat and begins to eat it. It is a long process. He will stand opposite your window for full ten minutes mumbling that small piece of bread, but he never looks up to inspire compassion or charity; he trusts to his pitiful mumbblings to produce the desired effect, and he is not disappointed. Coppers are flung to him from every window, and he picks them up slowly and listlessly, as if he did not expect such aid, and scarcely knew how to apply it. I have given him money several times, but that does not prevent him from returning again and again to stand opposite my windows and mumble crusts picked out of the mud in the streets. One day I gave him a lump of good bread, but in an hour after I found him in an adjacent street exciting charity in the usual way. This convinced me that he was an artful systematic beggar, and this impression was fully confirmed on my following him into a low beer-shop in St. Giles's and finding him comfortably seated with his feet up in a chair, smoking a long pipe, and discussing a pot of ale. He knew me in a moment, dropped his feet from the chair, and tried to hide his pipe. Since that occasion he has never come my way.

PETTY TRADING BEGGARS.

This is perhaps the most numerous class of beggars in London. Their trading in such articles as lucifers, boot-laces, cabbage-nets, tapes, cottons, shirt-buttons, and the like, is in most cases a mere "blind" to evade the law applying to mendicants and vagrants. There are very few of the street vendors of such petty articles as lucifers and shirt-buttons who can make a living from the profits of their trade. Indeed they do not calculate upon doing so. The box of matches, or the

little deal box of cottons, is used simply as a passport to the resorts of the charitable. The police are obliged to respect the trader, though they know very well that under the disguise of the itinerant merchant there lurks a beggar.

Beggars of this class use their trade to excite compassion and obtain a gift rather than to effect a sale. A poor half-clad wretch stands by the kerb exposing for sale a single box of matches, the price being "only a halfpenny." A charitable person passes by and drops a halfpenny or a penny into the poor man's hand, and disdains to take the matches. In this way a single box will be sufficient for a whole evening's trading, unless some person should insist upon an actual "transaction," when the beggar is obliged to procure another box at the nearest oilman's. There are very few articles upon which an actual profit is made by legitimate sale. Porcelain shirt-buttons, a favourite commodity of the petty trading beggars, would not yield the price of a single meal unless the seller could dispose of at least twenty dozen in a day. Cottons, stay-laces, and the like, can now be obtained so cheaply at the shops, that no one thinks of buying these articles in the streets unless it be in a charitable mood. Almost the only commodities in which a legitimate trade is carried on by the petty traders of the streets are flowers, songs, knives, combs, braces, purses, portmonnaies. The sellers of knives, combs, &c., are to a certain extent legitimate traders, and do not calculate upon charity. They are cheats, perhaps, but not beggars. The vendors of flowers and songs, though they really make an effort to sell their goods, and often realize a tolerable profit, are nevertheless beggars, and trust to increase their earnings by obtaining money without giving an equivalent. A great many children are sent out by their parents to sell flowers during the summer and autumn. They find their best market in the bars of public-houses, and especially those frequented by prostitutes. If none else give prostitutes a good character, the very poor do. "I don't know what we should do but for them," said an old beggar-woman to me one day. "They are good-hearted souls—always kind to the poor. I hope God will forgive them." I have had many examples of this sympathy for misfortune and poverty on the part of the fallen women of the streets. A fellow feeling no doubt makes them wondrous kind. They know what it is to be cast off, and spurned, and despised; they know, too, what it is to starve, and,

like the beggars, they are subject to the stern "move on" of the policeman.

The relations which subsist between the prostitutes and the beggars reveal some curious traits. Beggars will enter a public-house because they see some women at the bar who will assist their suit. They offer their little wares to some gentlemen at the bar, and the women will say, "Give the poor devil something," or "buy bouquets for us," or if the commodity should be laces or buttons, they say, "Don't take the poor old woman's things; give her the money." And the gentlemen, just to show off, and appear liberal, do as they are told. Possibly, but for the pleading of their gay companions, they would have answered the appeal with a curse and gruff command to begone. I once saw an old woman kiss a bedizened prostitute's hand, in real gratitude for a service of this kind. I don't know that I ever witnessed anything more touching in my life. The woman, who a few minutes before had been flaunting about the bar in the reckless manner peculiar to her class, was quite moved by the old beggar's act, and I saw a tear mount in her eye and slowly trickle down her painted cheek, making a white channel through the rouge as it fell. But in a moment she dashed it away, and the next was flaunting and singing as before. Prostitutes are afraid to remain long under the influence of good thoughts. They recal their days of innocence, and overpower them with an intolerable sadness—a sadness which springs of remorse. The gay women assume airs of patronage towards the beggars, and as such are looked up to; but a beggar-woman, however poor, and however miserable, if she is conscious of being virtuous, is always sensible of her superiority in that respect. She is thankful for the kindness of the "gay lady," and extols her goodness of heart; but she pities while she admires, and mutters as a last word, "May God forgive her." Thus does one touch of nature make all the world akin, and thus does virtue survive all the buffets of evil fortune to raise even a beggar to the level of the most worthy, and be a treasure dearer and brighter than all the pleasures of the world.

The sellers of flowers and songs are chiefly boys and young girls. They buy their flowers in Covent Garden, when the refuse of the market is cleared out, and make them up into small bouquets, which they sell for a penny. When the flower season is over they sell songs—those familiar productions of Ryle, Catnach and company, which, it is said, the great Lord

Macaulay was wont to collect and treasure up as collateral evidences of history. Some of the boys who pursue this traffic are masters of all the trades that appertain to begging. I have traced one boy, by the identifying mark of a most villanous squint, through a career of ten years. When I first saw him he was a mere child of about four years of age. His mother sent him with a ragged little girl (his sister) into public-house bars to beg. Their diminutive size attracted attention and excited charity. By-and-by, possibly in consequence of the interference of the police, they carried pennyworths of flowers with them, at other times matches, and at others halfpenny sheets of songs. After this the boy and the girl appeared dressed in sailor's costume, (both as boys,) and sung duets. I remember that one of the duets, which had a spoken part, was not very decent; the poor children evidently did not understand what they said; but the thoughtless people at the bar laughed and gave them money. By-and-by the boy became too big for this kind of work, and I next met him selling fuzees. After the lapse of about a year he started in the shoe-black line. His station was at the end of Endell Street, near the baths; but as he did not belong to one of the regularly organized brigades, he was hunted about by the police, and could not make a living. On the death of the crossing-sweeper at the corner he succeeded to that functionary's broom, and in his new capacity was regarded by the police as a useful member of society. The last time I saw him he was in possession of a costermonger's barrow selling mackerel. He had grown a big strong fellow, but I had no difficulty in identifying the little squinting child, who begged, and sold flowers and songs in public-house bars, with the strong loud-lunged vendor of mackerel. I suppose this young beggar may be said to have pursued an honourable career, and raised himself in the world. Many who have such an introduction to life finish their course in a penal settlement.

There are not a few who assume the appearance of petty traders for the purpose of committing thefts, such as picking a gentleman's pocket when he is intoxicated, and slinking into parlours to steal bagatelle balls. Police spies occasionally disguise themselves as petty traders. There is a well-known man who goes about with a bag of nuts, betting that he will tell within two how many you take up in your hand. This man is said to be a police spy. I have not been able to ascertain whether this is true or not; but I am satisfied that

the man does not get his living by his nut-trick. In the day-time he appears without his nuts, dressed in a suit of black, and looking certainly not unlike a policeman in mufti.

Among the petty trading beggars there are a good many idiots and half-witted creatures, who obtain a living—and a very good one too—by dancing in a grotesque and idiotic manner on the pavement to amuse children. Some of them are not such idiots as they appear, but assume a half-witted appearance to give oddness to their performance, and excite compassion for their misfortune. The street boys are the avengers of this imposition upon society.

The idiot performer has a sad life of it when the boys gather about him. They pull his clothes, knock off his hat, and pelt him with lime and mud. But this persecution sometimes redounds to his advantage; for when the grown-up folks see him treated thus, they pity him the more. These beggars always take care to carry something to offer for sale. Half-penny songs are most commonly the merchandise.

The little half-witted Italian man who used to go about grinding an organ that "had no inside to it," as the boys said, was a beggar of this class, and I really think he traded on his constant persecution by the *gamins*. Music, of course, he made none, for there was only one string left in his battered organ; but he always acted so as to convey the idea that the boys had destroyed his instrument. He would turn away at the handle in a desperate way, as if he were determined to spare no effort to please his patrons; but nothing ever came of it but a feeble tink-a-tink at long intervals. If his organ could at any time have been spoiled, certainly the boys might have done it; for their great delight was to put stones in it, and batter in its deal back with sticks. I am informed that this man had a good deal more of the rogue than of the fool in his composition. A gentleman offered to have his organ repaired for him; but he declined; and at length when the one remaining string gave way he would only have that one mended. It was his "dodge" to grind the air, and appear to be unconscious that he was not discoursing most eloquent music.

Tract-selling in the streets is a line peculiar to the Hindoos. I find that the tracts are given to them by religious people, and that they are bought by religious people, who are not unfrequently the very same persons who provided the tracts.

Very few petty trading beggars take to tract-selling from their own inspiration; for in good sooth it does not pay, except when conducted on the principle I have just indicated. Some find it convenient to exhibit tracts simply to evade the law applying to beggars and vagrants; but they do not use them if they can procure a more popular article. In these remarks it is very far from my intention to speak of "religious people" with any disrespect. I merely use the expression "religious people" to denote those who employ themselves actively and constantly in disseminating religious publications among the people. Their motives and their efforts are most praiseworthy, and my only regret is that their labours are not rewarded by a larger measure of success.

AN AUTHOR'S WIFE.

In the course of my inquiry into the habits, condition, and mode of life of the petty trading beggars of London, I met with a young woman who alleged that the publications she sold were the production of her husband. I encountered her at the bar of a tavern, where I was occupied in looking out for "specimens" of the class of beggars, which I am now describing. She entered the bar modestly and with seeming diffidence. She had some printed sheets in her hand. I asked her what they were. She handed me a sheet. It was entitled the *Pretty Girls of London*. It was only a portion of the work, and on the last page was printed "to be continued." "Do you bring this out in numbers?" I asked. "Yes, sir," she replied, "it is written by my husband, and he is continuing it from time to time." "Are you then his publisher?" I inquired. "Yes, sir, my husband is ill a-bed, and I am obliged to go out and sell his work for him?" I looked through the sheet, and I saw that it was not a very decent work. "Have you ever read this?" I enquired. "Oh yes, sir, and I think it's very clever; don't you think so, sir?" It certainly was written with some little ability, and I said so; but I objected to its morality. Upon which she replied, "But it's what takes, sir." She sold several copies while I was present, at twopence each; but one or two gave her fourpence and sixpence. As she was leaving I made further inquiries about her husband. She said he was an author by profession, and had seen better days. He was very ill, and unable to work. I asked her, to give me his address as I might be of some assistance to him. This request seemed to perplex her; and at length she

said, she was afraid her husband would not like to see me; he was very proud. I have since ascertained that this author's pretty little wife is a dangerous impostor. She lives, or did live at the time I met her, at the back of Clare Market, with a man (not her husband) who was well known to the police as a notorious begging-letter writer. He was not the author of anything but those artful appeals, with forged signatures, of which I have given specimens under the heading of "Screevers." I was also assured by an officer that the pretended author's wife had on one occasion been concerned in decoying a young man to a low lodging near Lincoln's Inn Fields, where the unsuspecting youth was robbed and maltreated.

DEPENDANTS OF BEGGARS.

The dependants of beggars may be divided into screevers proper; i. e., writers of "slums and fakements" for those who live by "screeving," and referees, or those who give characters to professional beggars when references are required. Beggars are generally born and bred to the business. Their fathers and mothers were beggars before them, and they have an hereditary right to the calling. The exceptions to this rule are those who have fallen into mendicancy, and follow it from necessity, and those who have flown to it in a moment of distress, and finding it more lucrative than they supposed, adopted it from choice. Hence it follows that the majority are entirely destitute of education; and by education I mean the primary arts of reading and writing. Where there is demand there is supply, and the wants of mendicants who found their account in "pads," and "slums," and "fakements," created "screevers."

The antecedents of the screever are always more or less—and generally more—disreputable. He has been a fraudulent clerk imprisoned for embezzlement; or a highly-respected treasurer to a philanthropic society, who has made off with the funds entrusted to him; or a petty forger, whose family have purchased silence, and "hushed up" a scandal; or, more frequently, that most dangerous of convicts, the half-educated convict—who has served his time or escaped his bonds.

Too proud to beg himself, or, more probably, too well known to the police to dare face daylight; ignorant of any honest calling, or too idle to practise it; without courage to turn thief or informer; lazy,

dissolute, and self-indulgent, the screever turns his little education to the worst of purposes, and prepares the forgery he leaves the more fearless cadger to utter.

The following are specimens of the screever's work, copied from the original documents in the possession of Mr. Horsford, of the Mendicity Society:—

"Parish of Battersea;
County of Surrey.

"This memorial sheweth that Mr. Alexander Fyfe, a native of Port Glasgow N.B. and for several years carrying on the business of a NURSERY and SEEDSMAN in this parish, became security for his son in law Andrew Talfour of Bay st. Port Glasgow who in October last privately disposed of his effects and absconded to the colonies, leaving his wife and six children totally unprovided for and the said Mr. Alexander Fyfe responsible for the sum of £1350. the sudden reverse of fortune together with other domestic afflictions so preyed on the mind of Mr. Fyfe that he is now an inmate of a LUNATIC ASYLUM.

"The said Mr. Fyfe together with his family have hitherto maintained the character of HONESTY and INDUSTRY in consideration of which I have been earnestly solicited by a few Benevolent persons to draw up this statement on behalf of the bereaved family. I have therefore taken on myself the responsibility of so doing trusting those whom Providence has given the means will lend their timely aid in rescuing a respectable family from the ruin that inevitably awaits them.

"GIVEN under my Hand at the VESTRY in the aforesaid parish of Battersea and County of Surrey this Twenty-Fourth day of February in the year of Our Lord 1851."

John Thomas Freeman,	£3
Vestry Clerk,	
J. S. Jenkinson	£5 0 0
Vicar of Battersea.	
Watson and Co.	£5
John Forster & Co.	5
Rev. J. Twining	2 2
Alderman J. Humphery ...	5
Sir George Pollock	5
Southlands.	
	£.
Henry Mitton	2
Wm. Downs	2
Oak wharf.	
Mrs. Broadley Wilson	1
Sir Henry B. Houghton ...	£5
Mrs. Adm ^l Colin Campbell ...	1..1
Col. J. Mc Donall... ..	£5 paid.
Anonymous	2

Mrs. Col. Forbes £3
 Col. W. Mace paid 5
 P. H. Gillespie 5
 Minister of the Scotch Church

Battersea Rise
 3d March /51
 Messrs. Moffat, Gillespie & Co. 5 pd.

My readers will perceive that the above document is written in a semi-legal style, with a profuse amount of large capitals, and minute particularity in describing localities, though here and there an almost ostentatious indifference exists upon the same points. Thus we are told that the parish of Battersea is in the county of Surrey, and that Port Glasgow is in North Britain, while on the other hand we are only informed that the absconding Andrew Talfour, of Bay Street, Port Glasgow, N.B., made off to the colonies, which, considering the vast extent of our colonial possessions, is vague, to say the least of it. It must also be allowed that, the beginning the word "benevolent" in the second paragraph with a capital B is equally to the credit of the writer's head and heart. It is odd that after having spelt "responsible" so correctly, the writer should have indulged a playful fancy with "responsibility;" but perhaps trifling orthographical lapses may be in keeping with the assumed character of vestry-clerk. Critically speaking, the weak point of this composition is its punctuation; its strong point the concluding paragraph, "the GIVEN under my hand at the VESTRY," which carries with it the double weight of a royal proclamation, and the business-like formality of an Admiralty contract; but the composition and calligraphy are trifles—the real genius lies in the signatures.

I wish my readers could see the names attached to this "Memorial" as they lay before me. The first, "J. S. Jenkinson," is written in the most clerical of hands; "Watson and Co." is round and commercial; "John Forster & Co." the same; the "Revd J. Twining" scholarly and easy; "Alderman J. Humphery" stiff and upright. These names are evidently copied from the Red Book and Directory; some are purely fictitious; many are cleverly executed forgeries.

The ingenuity of the concocter and compiler—of the sympathiser with the woes of Mr. Alexander Fyfe of Port Glasgow, N.B.—was exercised in vain. The imposture was detected; he was taken to a police-court, condemned, and sentenced.

Here is the case of another unfortunate Scotchman from the pen of the same gifted author. The handwriting, the wording,

the capitals, and the N.B.'s, are identical with those of the warm-hearted vestry-clerk of Battersea.

"These are to certify that Mr. Alexr. Malcolm Ship-Owner and General Merchant, was on his passage from FRASERBURGH, ABERDEENSHIRE, N.B. on the night of the 3d. inst when his vessel the Susan and Mary of Fraserburgh laden with Corn was run down by a "steamer name unknown" the Crew consisting of Six persons narrowly escaping with their lives.

"Mr. Malcolm sustained a loss of property by the appalling event to the amount of £370. and being a person of exemplary character with a numerous family entirely depending upon him for support his case has excited the greatest sympathy, it has therefore been proposed by a few of his friends to enter into a subscription on his behalf with a view of raising by voluntary contributions a sufficient sum to release him from his present embarrassed situation.

"I have known him for several years a constant trader to this wharf, and consider him worthy of every sympathy."

Leith and Glasgow Wharf	Joseph Adams	£5 0 0
London May 6th. 1847	Geo. Carroll	5
A. Nichol & Sons	pd.	5
P. Laurie	...	5
Vivian & Sons	...	3
J. H. Petty	...	2 pd
Messrs. Drummond	...	£5 pd.
Cranford Colvin & Co.	...	£3
Baring Brothers	...	5
Curries & Co.	...	3
Jono. Price	...	5 5
Reid, Irving & Co.	...	£5

The signatures attached to this are imitations of the handwriting of various firms, each distinct, individual, and apparently genuine.

The next "screeve" takes the form of a resolution at a public meeting:—

"Notting-Hill, District
 Parish of Kensington
 August 6th, 1857

"The Gentry and Clergy of this neighbourhood will no doubt remember that the late Mr. Edward Wyatt, (for many years a respectable tradesman in this parish) died in embarrassed circumstances in 1855, leaving a Widow and Seven Children totally unprovided for, the eldest of whom a fine Girl 19 years of age having been a Cripple from her Birth has received a liberal education and is considered a competent person to superintend a SEMINARY for the tuition of young females which would

materially assist her Mother in supporting a numerous family.

"A meeting was convened on Monday evening the 3rd inst (the Revd J. P. Gall, Incumbent of St. Johns, in the Chair) when it was unanimously proposed to enter into a subscription with a view of raising by voluntary contributions the sum of £40 in order to establish the afflicted girl in this praiseworthy undertaking, I have been instructed by the Parochial Authorities to draw up this statement and therefore take upon myself the responsibility of so doing knowing the case to be one meriting sympathy.

"Signed

By order of the Chairman

Reuben Green

Vestry Clerk"

Subscriptions received at the Meeting, £11 13 6	
Revd J. P. Gill	£1 0 0
Mrs. W. Money	10 0 pd
Chushington... ..	£1
Mrs Coventry paid	10/
J. & W. S. Huntley } Addison Terrace } Notting Hill }	pd ... 1 1
Mrs. Cribb pd	5 0
The Misses Shorland	7 6
Mrs Harris	5 0
Miss Hall Lansdowne Crescent	10/
W. Atkinson pd	5 0
Thos Jacomb... ..	5 0
Miss J. Robertson paid	5 0
The Misses Howard	5 0

The above letter is written in a better style than those preceding it. Great talent is exhibited in the imitations of "lady's-hand." The signatures "Mrs. Coventry," "Mrs. Cribb," "The Misses Howard," and "Mrs. Harris" (surely this screever must have been familiar with the works of Dickens), are excellently done, but are surpassed by the clever execution of the letters forming the names, "The Misses Shorland" and "Miss Hall Lansdowne Crescent," which are masterpieces of feminine calligraphy.

The following note was sent to its address, accompanied by a memorial in one of the House of Commons envelopes, but the faulty grammar, so unlike the style in which a member of Parliament ought to write, betrayed it.

"Committee Room No. 3
 House of Commons

"Mr. J. Whatman presents his respectful compliments to the Revd. W. Smith Marriott at the earnest request of the poor families (whose case will be fully explained on perusal of the accompanying document

in the bearer's possession), begs to submit it for that gentlemen's charitable consideration.

"The persons whom this concerns are natives of Cranbrook Gondhurst, Brenchley &c and bears unexceptionable characters, they have the honor of knowing Mr. Marriott at Worsmorden and trust he will add his signature to the list of subscribers, for which favour they will feel grateful.

"J. Whatman takes more than ordinary interest in this case having a knowledge of its authenticity, he therefore trusts that the motives which actuates him in complying with the request will be deemed a sufficient apology.

Friday Evening
 May 28, 1858"

"This Memorial sheweth that Mr. Henry Shepherd a General Carrier from EWELL, CHEAM, SUTTON &c. to LONDON VIA Mitchem, Morden, Tooting and Clapham, was returning home on the Evening of Thursday the 26th inst when near the Elephant and Castle, his Horse took fright at a Band of street Musicians and ran off at a furious pace, the Van coming in contact with a Timber carriage was dashed to pieces, the Animal received such injuries as caused its death, and Mr. SHEPHERD endeavouring to save the property entrusted to his care for delivery had his Right Leg fractured and is now an inmate of GUYS HOSPITAL.

"On further investigation We find his loss exceeds £70. and knowing him to be an Industrious, Honest man, with a large family depending upon his exertions for support We earnestly beg leave to recommend his case to the notice of the Gentry and Clergy of his neighbourhood, trusting their united Donations in conjunction with our mutual assistance will release a deserving family from their present unfortunate position in life.

"GIVEN under Our
 Hands this 30th day of August in the Year of
 Our Lord 1858" William Harmer £ 2

Geo. Stone Ewell	£2
Sir Geo. L. Glyn	2 2
F. Gosling	2 2
Revd W. H. Vernon	£1
Morton Stubbs	1 1
Sutton	
Edmund Antrobus... ..	£2 2
pd to Bearer	
2d/9th/58	
W. R. G. Farmer	£2 2
pd.	
Revd. R. Bouchier... ..	£2 pd.

My readers must admire the ingenuity of this letter. The *VIA Mitchem* looks so formal and convincing. The grouping of the circumstances—the “local colouring,” as the critics would call it, which contributed to the ruin of the ill-fated general carrier Henry Shepherd—is excellent.—“Near the Elephant and Castle his horse took fright at a band of street musicians.” What more natural? “Ran off at a furious pace. The van, coming in contact with a timber carriage, was dashed to pieces. The Animal,” not the horse—that would have been tautological, and Animal with a capital A. “The Animal received such injuries as caused its death, and Mr. Shepherd, endeavouring to save the property entrusted to his care—” Admirable man! Devoted carrier!—leaving his van to smash—his horse to perish as they might, that the goods confided to him might receive no hurt. “. . . endeavouring to save the property entrusted to his care for delivery, had his right leg fractured, and is now an inmate of Guy’s Hospital.”

This is as well conceived and carried out as Sheridan’s pistol-bullet that misses its mark, “strikes a bronze Hercules in the mantel-piece, glances off through the window, and wounds the postman who was coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire!”

The word “Paid” and its abbreviation pd. is scattered here and there artistically among the subscriptions. A small note in a different hand, in a corner of the last page shows the fate of industry and talent misapplied. It runs:—

“Taken from Thos. Shepherd, Sept. 13. Mansion House. Lord Mayor Sir A. Carden. Committed for 3 months.

“J. W. HORSFORD.”

The last instance I shall cite is peculiar, from the elaborate nature of the deception, and from containing a forgery of the signature of Lord Brougham. The screever, in this case, has taken a regularly printed Warrant, Execution, or Distress for Rent, filled it up with the name of Mrs. Julia Thompson, &c., and placed an imaginary inventory to a fictitious seizure. The word “Patent” is spelt “Pattent,” which might be allowable in a broker’s man, but when “Ewer” is written “Ure,” I think he is too hard upon the orthography peculiar to the officers of the Sheriff of Middlesex, particularly as it is evident from the rest of the filling-in of the form that the error is intentional. Not only law but science is invoked in aid of this capital case of

sham real distress. “Pleuro-Pneumonia” looks veterinary and veracious enough to carry conviction to the hearts of the most sceptical.

“TAKE NOTICE, That by the authority and on the behalf of your Landlord, Thos. Young, I have this Sixteenth day of April in the year of Our Lord One thousand eight hundred and fifty-six distrained the several goods and chattels specified in the Schedule or Inventory hereinunder written in

19 Praed Street
in the Parish of
Paddington in the County of
Middlesex, for Twenty-nine
pounds, being Twelve Months
and arrears Rent due to the
said Mr. Thos. Young

at Ninth Februry last
and if you shall not pay the
said Twelve Months and
Arrears Rent so due and in
arrears as aforesaid together with the costs
and charges of this distress or replevy the
said goods and chattels within five days
from the date hereof I shall cause the said
goods and chattels to be appraised and
sold, pursuant to the statute in that case
made and provided.

“Given under my hand the day and
year above written.

“J. W. RUSSELL,

“Sworn Broker, &c.

“To Mrs. Julia Thompson.”

The Schedule or Inventory above referred to:—

Mahogany Drawers
Mahogany Dining Tables
Six Mahogany Seated Chairs
Two Arm Do. Do.
One Eight-Day clock
Six Oil Paintings Gilt Frames
One Large Pier Glass
Carpet and Hearthrug
Fender and Fire-irons
Quantity of Chimney Ornaments
Six Kitchen Chairs
One Long Table Deal
One Large Copper Boiler
Two Copper Kettles
Pattent Mangle
One Large Water Butt
Two Washing Tubs
1½ Doz. of Knives and Forkes
Quantity of Earthenware &c. &c.
Two Feather Beds & Bedding
One Flock Do. Do.
Two Mahogany Bedsteads
One French Do

Removing any goods off the premises to avoid a distress or any person aiding, assisting, or concealing the same, will subject themselves to double the value of such effects so removed or concealed, or suffer imprisonment in the House of Correction, there to be kept to hard labour without Bail or Matrprize for Six Months, pursuant to the Act 11th George 2nd.

Sold by G. H. Beckford, Law Stationer, 122, Chancery Lane.

Washhand stand Ure &c.
Two Hair Mattresses
Three Bedroom Chairs
One set of Bedroom Carpeting
Staircase Carpeting, Brass Rods &c
One Milch Cow
One Cart Mare
One Dung Cart
One Wheelbarrow
Three Cwt. of Hay
Quantity of Manure
And Sundry Dairy Utensils
&c. &c. &c.

Mr Davidson £2
Mrs. H. Scott Waring .. 3 5
Mrs Hall 1 1
Saml. Venables 2
Revd. A. Taylor 1
Revd. H. V. Le Bas 1
Thomas Bunting 2 pd.
Mrs & Miss Vullamy .. 3
Revd. C. Smalley 5
Miss Smalley 3
Lord Brougham 2

On the back of this legal document is written:

“This memorial sheweth that Mrs. Julia Thompson, widow, Cowkeeper and Dairy-woman has since the demise of her husband which took place in 1849 supported a family consisting of six children by the assistance of a small Dairy the Pleuro-Pneumonia a disease Among Cattle has prevailed in the neighbourhood for several weeks during which time she has lost five Milch Cows estimated at £75. ,, ,, which will end in her entire ruin unless aided by the Hands of the Benevolent whose Donations in conjunction with Our mutual assistance will We trust enable Mrs. Thompson to realize some part of her lost property to follow her Business As before.

H. Peters £3 3 0
April 17th, 1856
Chaplin & Horne £2
Mrs. Gore 1
Revd J. W. Buckley 2
Revd John Miles 1
Mrs. J. Shaw 2 pd
C. Lushington 3 3
W. H. Ormsby 2
C. Molyneux 1
Miss Ferrers 2 pd
W. Emmitt 2 2
Anonymous 2 0
Misses Gregg 2 2
Miss Browne 1
J. B. White & Bros 3 pd
Thos Slater 2
W. T. Bird 2 pd.
Miss Hamilton 3 pd
Revd. J. A. Toole 2 pd
Mr. Hopgood 2 Paid
A Friend to the Widow .. 3 3
Paid to Mr. Pegg
Richd Green £2 pd
Revd A. M. Campbell .. 3
W. P. France 1
W. M. N. Reilly 2 2
Mrs. Forbes 2 pd
R. Gurney 1
J. Spurling 2 pd
Geo. R. Ward 1
Miss Brown 2
Mrs Needham 2 Paid

The two most notorious “screevers” of the present day are Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Johnson of Westminster, or as he is proud of being called, “Johnson the Schemer.”

REFEREES

are generally keepers of low lodging-houses, brothels, &c., or small tradesmen who supply thieves and beggars with chandlery, &c. When applied to for the character of any of their friends and confederates, they give them an excellent recommendation—but are careful not to *overdo* it. With that highest sort of artfulness that conceals artfulness, they know when to stop, and seldom or never betray themselves by saying too much.

“Mrs. Simmons!” said one of them in answer to an application for character—“ah, yes, sir, I know her a good many years, and a very honest, hard-working, industrious, sober sort of a person I always knowed her to be, at least as far as I see—I never see nothing wrong in the woman for *my* part. The earliest-uppest, and downest-latest woman I ever see, and well she need be, with that family of hers—nine on ’em, and the eldest girl a idiot. When first I knew her, sir, her husband was alive, and then Susan—that’s the idiot, sir, were a babe in arms—her husband was a bad man to her, sir—the way that man drunk and spent his money among all the lowest girls and corner-coves was awful to see,—I mean by corner-coves them sort of men who is always a standing at the corners of the streets and chaffing respectable folks a passing by—we call them corner-coves about here; but as to poor Mrs. Simmons, sir, that husband of hers *tret* her awful—though he’s dead and gone now, poor man, and perhaps I have no right to speak ill on the dead. He had some money with her too—two hundred pound I heard—her father was a builder in a small way—and lived out towards Fulham—a very deserving woman I always found her, sir, and I have helped her a little bit myself, not much of course, for my circumstances would not allow of it; I’ve a wife and family myself—and I have often been wish-

ful I could help her more, but what can a man do as has to pay his rent and taxes, and bring up his family respectable? When her last baby but two had the ring-worm we helped her now and then with a loaf of bread—poor thing—it ran right through the family, that ring-worm did—six on 'em had it at the same time, she told us—and then they took the measles—the most unluckiest family in catching things as goes about I never saw—but as to Mrs. Simmons herself, sir, poor thing—a more hard-working and honest woman I never, &c., &c., &c.”

DISTRESSED OPERATIVE BEGGARS.

All beggars are ingenious enough to make capital of public events. They read the newspapers, judge the bent of popular sympathy, and decide on the “lay” to be adopted. The “Times” informs its readers that two or three hundred English navigators have been suddenly turned adrift in France. The native labourers object to the employment of aliens, and our stalwart countrymen have been subjected to insult as well as privation. The beggar’s course is taken; he goes to Petticoat Lane, purchases a white smock frock, a purple or red plush waistcoat profusely ornamented with wooden buttons, a coloured cotton neckerchief, and a red nightcap. If procurable “in the Lane,” he also buys a pair of coarse-ribbed grey worsted-sockings, and boots whose enormous weight is increased by several pounds of iron nails in their thick soles; even then he is not perfect, he seeks a rag and bottle and old iron shop—your genuine artist-beggar never asks for what is new, he prefers the worn, the used, the ragged and the rusty—and bargains for a spade. The proprietor of the shop knows perfectly well that his customer requires an article for show, not service, and they part with a mutual grin, and the next day every street swarms with groups of distressed navigators. Popular feeling is on their side, and halfpence shower round them. Meanwhile the poor fellows for whom all this generous indignation is evoked are waiting in crowds at a French port till the British Consul passed them over to their native soil as paupers.

The same tactics are pursued with manufactures. Beggars read the list of patents, and watch the effect of every fresh discovery in mechanics on the operatives of Lancashire and Yorkshire. A new machine is patented. So many hands are thrown out of work. So many beggars, who have never seen Lancashire, except when on the

tramp, are heard in London. A strike takes place at several mills, pretended “hands” next day parade the streets. Even the variability of our climate is pressed into the “cadging” service; a frost locks up the rivers, and hardens the earth, rusty spades and gardening tools are in demand, and the indefatigable beggar takes the pavement in another “fancy dress.” Every social shipwreck is watched and turned to account by these systematic land-wreckers, who have reduced false signals to a regular code, and beg by rule and line and chart and compass.

STARVED-OUT MANUFACTURERS

parade in gangs of four and five, or with squalid wives and a few children. They wear paper-caps and white aprons with “bibs” to them, or a sort of cross-barred pinafore, called in the manufacturing districts a “chequer-brat.” Sometimes they make a “pitch,” that is, stand face to face, turning their backs upon a heartless world, and sing. The well-known ditty of

“We are all the way from Manches-ter
And we’ve got no work to do!”

set to the tune of, “Oh let us be joyful,” was first introduced by this class of beggars. Or they will carry tapes, stay-laces, and papers of buttons, and throw imploring looks from side to side, and beg by implication. Or they will cock their chins up in the air, so as to display the unpleasantly prominent apples in their bony throats, and drone a psalm. When they go out “on the blob,” they make a long oration, not in the Lancashire or Yorkshire dialects, but in a cockney voice, of a strong White-chapel flavour. The substance of the speech varies but slightly from the “patter” of the hand-loom weaver; indeed, the Nottingham “driz” or lace-man, the hand on strike, the distressed weaver, and the “operative” beggar, generally hear so strong a resemblance to each other, that they not only look like but sometimes positively *are* one and the same person.

UNEMPLOYED AGRICULTURISTS and FROZEN-OUT GARDENERS

are seen during a frost in gangs of from six to twenty. Two gangs generally “work” together, that is, while one gang begs at one end of a street, a second gang begs at the other. Their mode of procedure their “programme,” is very simple. Upon the spades which they carry is chalked “frozen-out!” or “starving!” and they enhance the effect of this “slum or fake-

ment,” by shouting out sturdily “frozen out,” “We’re all frozen-out!” The gardeners differ from the agriculturists or “navvies” in their costume. They affect aprons and old straw hats, their manner is less demonstrative, and their tones less rusty and unmelodious. The “navvies” roar; the gardeners squeak. The navvies’ petition is made loud and lustily, as by men used to work in clay and rock; the gardeners’ voice is meek and mild, as of a gentle nature trained to tend on fruits and flowers. The young bulky, sinewy beggar plays navvy; the shrivelled, gravelly, pottering, elderly cadger performs gardener.

There can be no doubt that in times of hardship many honest labourers are forced into the streets to beg. A poor hard-working man, whose children cry to him for food, can feel no scruple in soliciting charity,—against such the writer of these pages would urge nothing; all credit to the motive that compels them unwillingly to ask alms; all honour to the feeling that prompts the listener to give. It is not the purpose of the author of this work to write down every mendicant an impostor, or every almsgiver a fool; on the contrary, he knows how much real distress, and how much real benevolence exist, and he would but step between the open hand of true charity, and the itching palm of the professional beggar, who stands between the misery that asks and the philanthropy that would relieve.

The winter of 1860-61 was a fine harvest for the “frozen out” impostors, some few of whom, happily, reaped the reward of their deserts in the police-courts. Three strong hearty men were brought up at one office; they said that they were starving, and they came from Horselydown; when searched six shillings and elevenpence were found upon them; they reiterated that they were starving and were out of work, on which the sitting magistrate kindly provided them with both food and employment, by sentencing them to seven days’ hard labour.

The “profits” of the frozen-out gardener and agriculturist are very large, and generally quadruples the sum earned by honest labour. In the February of 1861, four of these “distressed navvies” went into a public-house to divide the “swag” they had procured by one day’s shouting. Each had a handkerchief filled with bread and meat and cheese. They called for pots of porter and drank heartily, and when the reckoning was paid and the spoils equally divided, the share of each man was seven shillings.

The credulity of the public upon one point has often surprised me. A man comes out into the streets to say that he is starving, a few halfpence are thrown to him. If really hungry he would make for the nearest baker’s shop; but no, he picks up the coppers, pockets them, and proclaims again that he is starving, though he has the means of obtaining food in his fingers. Not that this obvious anachronism stops the current of benevolence or the chink of coin upon the stones—the fainting, famished fellow walks leisurely up the street, and still bellows out in notes of thunder, “I am starving!” If one of my readers will try when faint and exhausted to produce the same tone in the open air, he will realize the impossibility of shouting and starving simultaneously.

HAND-LOOM WEAVERS AND OTHERS DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIVING BY MACHINERY.

As has been before stated, the regular beggar seizes on the latest pretext for a plausible tale of woe. Improvements in mechanics, and consequent cheapness to the many, are usually the causes of loss to the few. The sufferings of this minority is immediately turned to account by veteran cadgers, who rush to their wardrobes of well-chosen rags, attire themselves in appropriate costume, and ply their calling with the last grievance out. When unprovided with “patter,” they seek the literati of their class, and buy a speech; this they partly commit to memory, and trust to their own ingenuity to improvise any little touches that may prove effective. Many “screevers, slum-scribblers, and fakement-dodgers” eke out a living by this sort of authorship. Real operatives seldom stir from their own locality. The sympathy of their fellows, their natural habits, and the occasional relief afforded by the parish bind them to their homes, and the “distressed weaver” is generally a spurious metropolitan production. The following is a copy of one of their prepared orations:

“My kind Christian Friends,

“We are poor working-men from — which cannot obtain bread by our labour, owing to the new alterations and inventions which the master-manufacturers have introduced, which spares them the cost of employing hands, and does the work by machinery instead. Yes, kind friends, machinery and steam-engines now does the work, which formerly was done by our hands and work and labour. Our masters have turned us off, and we are without bread and knowing no other trade but that

which we was born and bred to, we are compelled to ask your kind assistance, for which, be sure of it, we shall be ever grateful. As we have said, masters now employs machinery and steam-engines instead of men, forgetting that steam-engines have no families of wives or children, and consequently are not called on to provide for them. We are without bread to put into our mouths, also our wives and children are the same. Foreign competition has drove our masters to this step, and we working-men are the sufferers thereby. Kind friends, drop your compassion on us: the smallest trifle will be thankfully received, and God will bless you for the relief you give to us. May you never know what it is to be as we are now, drove from our work, and forced to come out into the streets to beg your charity from door to door. Have pity on us, for our situation is most wretched. Our wives and families are starving, our children cry to us for bread, and we have none to give them. Oh, my friends, look down on us with compassion. We are poor working-men, weavers from ——— which cannot obtain bread by our labour owing to the new inventions in machinery, which, &c. &c. &c.

In concluding this section of our work, I would commend to the notice of my readers the following observations on almsgiving:—

The poor will never cease from the land. There always will be exceptional excesses and outbreaks of distress that no plan could have provided against, and there always will be those who stand with open palm to receive, in the face of heaven, our tribute of gratitude for our own

happier lot. Yet there is a duty of the head as well as of the heart, and we are bound as much to use our reason as to minister of our abundance. The same heaven that has rewarded our labours, and filled our garner or our coffers, or at least, given us favour in the sight of merchants and bankers, has given us also brains, and consequently a charge to employ them. So we are bound to sift appeals, and consider how best to direct our benevolence. Whoever thinks that charity consists in mere giving, and that he has only to put his hand in his pocket, or draw a check in favour of somebody who is very much in want of money, and looks very grateful for favours to be received, will find himself taught better, if not in the school of adversity, at least by many a hard lesson of kindness thrown away, or perhaps very brutally repaid. As animals have their habits, so there is a large class of mankind whose single cleverness is that of representing themselves as justly and naturally dependent on the assistance of others, who look paupers from their birth, who seek givers and forsake those who have given as naturally as a tree sends its roots into new soil and deserts the exhausted. It is the office of reason—reason improved by experience—to teach us not to waste our own interest and our resources on beings that will be content to live on our bounty, and will never return a moral profit to our charitable industry. The great opportunities or the mighty powers that heaven may have given us, it never meant to be lavished on mere human animals who eat, drink and sleep, and whose only instinct is to find out a new caterer when the old one is exhausted.

APPENDIX.

MAPS AND TABLES

ILLUSTRATING THE CRIMINAL STATISTICS OF EACH OF THE COUNTIES
OF ENGLAND AND WALES IN 1851.

	PAGE
MAP SHOWING THE DENSITY OF THE POPULATION	451
Table of ditto	452
MAP SHOWING THE INTENSITY OF CRIMINALITY	455
Table of ditto	456
MAP SHOWING THE INTENSITY OF IGNORANCE	459
Table of ditto	460
Table of Ignorance among Criminals	462
Table of Relative Degrees of Criminality	464
Comparative Educational Tables	465
MAP SHOWING THE NUMBER OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN	467
Table of ditto	468
MAP SHOWING THE NUMBER OF EARLY MARRIAGES	471
Table of ditto	472
MAP SHOWING THE NUMBER OF FEMALES	475
Table of ditto	476
MAP SHOWING COMMITTALS FOR RAPE	477
Table of ditto	479
MAP SHOWING COMMITTALS FOR CARNALLY ABUSING GIRLS	481
Table of ditto	482
MAP SHOWING COMMITTALS FOR DISORDERLY HOUSES	485
Table of ditto	486
MAP SHOWING CONCEALMENT OF BIRTHS	489
Table of ditto	490
MAP SHOWING ATTEMPTS AT MISCARRIAGE	493
Table of ditto	494
MAP SHOWING ASSAULTS WITH INTENT	497
Table of ditto	498
MAP SHOWING COMMITTALS FOR BIGAMY	499
Table of ditto	500
MAP SHOWING COMMITTALS FOR ABDUCTION	501
Table of ditto	502
MAP SHOWING THE CRIMINALITY OF FEMALES	503
Table of ditto	504