

OF THE CHILDREN STREET-SELLERS OF
LONDON.

WHEN we consider the spirit of emulation, of imitation, of bravado, of opposition, of just or idle resentment, among boys, according to their training, companionship, natural disposition, and, above all, home treatment, it seems most important to ascertain how these feelings and inclinations are fostered or stimulated by the examples of the free street-life of other lads to be seen on every side. There is no doubt that to a large class of boys, whose parents are not in poverty, the young street ruffian is a hero.

If this inquiry be important, as it unquestionably is, concerning boys, how much more important is it, when it includes the female children of the streets; when it relates to the sex who, in all relations of life, and in all grades of society, are really the guardians of a people's virtue.

The investigation is, again, rendered more interesting and more important, when it includes those children who have known no guidance from parent, master, or relative, but have been flung into the streets through neglect, through viciousness, or as outcasts from utter destitution. Mixed with the children who really *sell* in the streets, are the class who assume to sell that they may have the better chance to steal, or the greater facility to beg.

Before I classify what I consider to be the causes which have driven children to a street career, with all its hardening consequences, I may point out that culpability cannot be imputed to them at the commencement of their course of life. They have been either untaught, mistaught, maltreated, neglected, regularly trained to vice, or fairly turned into the streets to shift for themselves. The censure, then, is attributable to parents, or those who should fill the place of parents—the State, or society. The exceptions to this culpability as regards parents are to be found in the instances where a costermonger employs his children to aid him in his business occupation, which the parents, in their ignorance or prejudices, may account as good as any other, and the youths thus become unfit, perhaps, for any other than a scrambling street life. A second exception may be where the children in a poor family (as continually happens among the Irish in London) *must* sell in the streets, that they may eat in any place.

In the following details I shall consider all to be children who are under fifteen years of age. It is just beyond that age (or the age of puberty) that, as our prison statistics and other returns show, criminal dispositions are developed, "self-

will" becomes more imperious and headstrong, that destructive propensity, or taste, which we term the ruling passion or character of the individual is educed, and the destiny of the human being, especially when apart from the moulding and well-directed care of parents or friends, is influenced perhaps for life.

The Causes, then, which fill our streets with children who either manifest the keen and sometimes roguish propensity of a precocious trader, the daring and adroitness of the thief, or the loutish indifference of the mere dull vagabond, content if he can only eat and sleep, I consider to be these:—

1. The conduct of parents, masters, and mistresses.
2. The companionship and associations formed in tender years.
3. The employment of children by costermongers and others who live by street traffic, and the training of costermongers' children to a street life.
4. Orphanhood, friendlessness, and utter destitution.
5. Vagrant dispositions and tastes on the part of children, which cause them to be runaways.

After this I shall treat of (a) the pursuits of the street-trading children; (b) their earnings; (c) the causes or influences which have induced children to adopt some especial branch of a street life; (d) their state of education; (e) their morals, religion, opinions, and conduct; (f) places and character of dwellings; (g) diet; (h) amusements; (i) clothing; (j) propensities.

Concerning cause 1, viz., "The conduct of parents, masters, and mistresses," I should have more to say were I treating of the juvenile criminals, instead of sellers in the streets. The brute tyranny of parents, manifested in the wreaking of any annoyances or disappointments they may have endured, in the passionate beating and cursing of their children, for trifling or for no causes, is among the worst symptoms of a depraved nature. This conduct may be the most common among the poor, for among them are fewer conventional restraints; but it exists among and debases other classes. Some parents only exercise this tyranny in their fits of drunkenness, and make that their plea in mitigation; but their dispositions are then only the more undisguisedly developed, and they would be equally unjust or tyrannical when sober, but for some selfish fear which checks them. A boy perhaps endures this course of tyranny some time, and then finding it increase he feels its further endurance intolerable, and runs away. If he have no friends with whom he can hope to find a shelter, the streets only are open to him. He soon meets with comrades, some of whom perhaps had been circumstanced like himself, and, if not strongly disposed to idleness and vicious indulgencies, goes through a course of horse-holding, errand-running, parcel-carrying, and such like, and so becomes, if honestly or prudently inclined, a street-seller, beginning with fuzees, or nuts, or some unexpensive stock. The where to buy and the how to sell he will find



plenty to teach him at the lodging-houses, where he *must* sleep when he can pay for a bed.

When I was collecting information concerning brace-selling I met with a youth of sixteen who about two years previously had run away from Birmingham, and made his way to London, with 2s. 6d. Although he earned something weekly, he was so pinched and beaten by a step-mother (his father was seldom at home except on Sunday) that his life was miserable. This went on for nearly a year, until the boy began to resist, and one Saturday evening, when beaten as usual, he struck in return, drawing blood from his step-mother's face. The father came home before the fray was well ended; listened to his wife's statement, and would not listen to the boy's, and in his turn chastised the lad mercilessly. In five minutes after the boy, with aching bones and a bitter spirit, left his father's house and made his way to London, where he was then vending cheap braces. This youth could neither read nor write, and seemed to possess no quickness or intelligence. The only thing of which he cared to talk was his step-mother's treatment of him; all else was a blank with him, in comparison; this was the one burning recollection.

I may here observe, that I heard of several instances of children having run away and adopted a street life in consequence of the violence of step-mothers far more than of step-fathers.

I cite the foregoing instance, as the boy's career was exactly that I have described; but the reader will remember, that in the many and curious narratives I have collected, how often the adult street-seller has begun such a life by being a runaway from domestic tyranny. Had this Birmingham boy been less honest, or perhaps less dull, it would have been far easier for him to have become a thief than a street-trader. To the gangs of young thieves, a new boy, who is not known to the police is often (as a smart young pickpocket, then known as the Cocksparrow, described it to me) "a God-send."

My readers will remember that in the collected statements of the street-folk, there are several accounts of runaways, but they were generally older than the age I have fixed, and it was necessary to give an account of one who comes within my classification of a child.

I did not hear of any girls who had run away from their homes having become street-sellers merely. They more generally fall into a course of prostitution, or sometimes may be ostensibly street-sellers as a means of accosting men, and, perhaps, for an attractive pretence to the depraved, that they are poor, innocent girls, struggling for an honest penny. If they resort to the low lodging-houses, where the sexes are lodged indiscriminately, their ruin seems inevitable.

2. That the companionship and associations formed in tender years lead many children to a street life is so evident, that I may be brief on the subject. There are few who are in the habit of noting what they may observe of poor children in the streets and quieter localities, who have not seen little boys playing at marbles,

or gambling with halfpennies, farthings, or buttons, with other lads, and who have laid down their basket of nuts or oranges to take part in the play. The young street-seller has probably more halfpence at his command, or, at any rate, in his possession, than his non-dealing playmates; he is also in the undoubted possession of what appears a large store of things for which poor boys have generally a craving and a relish. Thus the little itinerant trader is envied and imitated.

This attraction to a street career is very strong, I have ascertained, among the neglected children of the poor, when the parents are absent at their work. On a Saturday morning, some little time since, I was in a flagged court near Drury-lane, a wretched place, which was full of children of all ages. The parents were nearly all, I believe, then at work, or "on the look out for a job," as porters in Covent Garden-market, and the children played in the court until their return. In one corner was a group of four or five little boys gambling and squabbling for nuts, of which one of the number was a vendor. A sharp-looking lad was gazing enviously on, and I asked him to guide me to the room of a man whom I wished to see. He did so, and I gave him a penny. On my leaving the court I found this boy the most eager of the players, gambling with the penny I had given him. I had occasion to return there a few hours after, and the same lad was leaning against the wall, with his hands in his pockets, as if suffering from listlessness. He had had no luck with the nut covey, he told me, but he hoped before long to sell nuts himself. He did not know his age, but he appeared to be about eleven. Only last week I saw this same lad hawking a basket, very indifferently stocked with oranges. He had raised a shilling, he said, and the "Early Bird" (the nickname of a young street-seller) had put him up to the way to lay it out. On my asking if his father (a journeyman butcher) knew what he was doing, he replied that so long as he didn't bother his father he could do what he pleased, and the more he kept out of his (the father's) way the better he would be liked and treated.

The association of poor boys and girls with the children of the costermongers, and of the Irish fruit-sellers, who are employed in itinerant vending, is often productive of a strong degree of envy on the part of unemployed little ones, who look upon having the charge of a basket of fruit, to be carried in any direction, as a species of independence.

3. "The employment of children by costermongers, and others who live by street traffic; and the training of costermongers' children to a street life, is the ordinary means of increase among the street-folk."

The children of the costermongers become necessarily, as I have already intimated, street-dealers, and perhaps more innocently than in any other manner, by being required, as soon as their strength enables them, to assist their parents in their work, or sell trifles, single-handed, for the behoof of their parents. The child does but obey his father, and the father does but rear the child

to the calling by which his daily bread is won. This is the case particularly with the Irish, who often have large families, and bring them with them to London.

There are, moreover, a great number of boys, "anybody's children," as I heard them called, who are tempted and trained to pursue an open-air traffic, through being engaged by costermongers or small tradesmen to sell upon commission, or, as it is termed, for "bunse." In the curious, and almost in every instance novel, information which I gave to the public concerning the largest body of the street-sellers, the costermongers, this word "bunse" (probably a corruption of *bonus*, *bone* being the slang for good) first appeared in print. The mode is this: a certain quantity of saleable, and sometimes of not very saleable, commodities is given to a boy whom a costermonger knows and perhaps employs, and it is arranged that the young commission-agent is to get a particular sum for them, which must be paid to the costermonger; I will say 3s., that being somewhere about the maximum. For these articles the lad may ask and obtain any price he can, and whatever he obtains beyond the stipulated 3s. is his own profit or "bunse." The remuneration thus accruing to the boy-vendor of course varies very materially, according to the season of the year, the nature of the article, and the neighbourhood in which it is hawked. Much also depends upon whether the boy has a regular market for his commodities; whether he has certain parties to whom he is known and upon whom he can call to solicit custom; if he has, of course his facilities for disposing of his stock in trade are much greater than in the case of one who has only the chance of attracting attention and obtaining custom by mere crying and bawling "Penny a piece, Colly-flowers," "Five bunches a penny, Red-dish-es," and such like. The Irish boys call this "having a back," an old Hibernian phrase formerly applied to a very different subject and purpose.

Another cause of the abundance of street-dealers among the boyish fraternity, whose parents are unable or unwilling to support them, is that some costers keep a lad as a regular assistant, whose duty it is to pull the barrow of his master about the streets, and assist him in "crying" his wares. Sometimes the man and the boy call out together, sometimes separately and alternately, but mostly the boy alone has to do this part of the work, the coster's voice being generally rough and hoarse, while the shrill sound of that of the boy re-echoes throughout the street along which they slowly move, and is far more likely to strike the ear, and consequently to attract attention, than that of the man. This mode of "practising the voice" is, however, perfectly ruinous to it, as in almost every case of this description we find the natural tone completely annihilated at a very early age, and a harsh, hoarse, guttural, disagreeable mode of speaking acquired. In addition to the costers there are others who thus employ boys in the streets: the hawkers of coal do so invariably, and the milkmen—especially those who drive cows or have

a cart to carry the milk-pails in. Once in the streets and surrounded with street-associates, the boy soon becomes inured to this kind of life, and when he leaves his first master, will frequently start in some branch of costermongering for himself, without seeking to obtain another constant employment.

This mode of employing lads, and on the whole perhaps they are fairly enough used by the costermongers, and generally treated with great kindness by the costers' wives or concubines, is, I am inclined to think, the chief cause of the abundance and even increase of the street-sellers of fish, fruit, and vegetables.

4. To "orphanhood, friendlessness, and utter destitution," the commerce of the streets owes a considerable portion of its merchants. A child finds himself or herself an orphan; the parents having been miserably poor, he or she lives in a place where street-folk abound; it seems the only road to a meal and a bed, and the orphan "starts" with a few lucifer-matches, boot-laces, nuts, or onions. It is the same when a child, without being an orphan, is abandoned or neglected by the parents, and, perhaps without any injunctions either for or against such a course, is left to his or her own will to sell or steal in the streets.

5. The vagrant dispositions and tastes of lads, and, it may be, now and then somewhat of a reckless spirit of adventure, which in our days has far fewer fields than it once had, is another cause why a street-life is embraced. Lads have been known to run away from even comfortable homes through the mere spirit of restlessness; and sometimes they have done so, but not perhaps under the age of fifteen, for the unrestrained indulgence of licentious passions. As this class of runaways, however, do not ordinarily settle into regular street-sellers, but become pickpockets, or trade only with a view to cloak their designs of theft, I need not further allude to them under this head.

I now come to the second part of my subject, the *Pursuits, &c.*, of the children in street avocations.

As I have shown in my account of the women street-sellers, there is no calling which this body of juveniles monopolize, none of which they are the *sole* possessors; but some are principally in their hands, and there are others, again, to which they rarely incline.

Among the wares sold by the boys and girls of the streets are:—money-bags, lucifer-match boxes, leather straps, belts, firewood (common, and also "patent," that is, dipped into an inflammable composition), fly-papers, a variety of fruits, especially nuts, oranges, and apples; onions, radishes, water-cresses, cut flowers and lavender (mostly sold by girls), sweet-briar, India rubber, garters, and other little articles of the same material, including elastic rings to encircle rolls of paper-music, toys of the smaller kinds, cakes, steel pens and penholders with glass handles, exhibition medals and cards, gelatine cards, glass and other cheap seals, brass watch-guards, chains, and rings; small tin ware, nutmeg-graters, and other articles



THE CRIPPLED STREET BIRD-SELLER.
(From a Drawing by Beaman.)

of a similar description, such as are easily portable; iron skewers, fuzees, shirt buttons, boot and stay-laces, pins (and more rarely needles), cotton bobbins, Christmasing (holly and other evergreens at Christmas-tide), May-flowers, coat-studs, toy-pottery, blackberries, groundsel and chickweed, and clothes'-pegs.

There are also other things which children sell temporarily, or rather in the season. This year I saw lads selling wild birds'-nests with their eggs, such as hedge-sparrows, minnows in small glass globes, roots of the wild Early Orchis (*Orchis mascula*), and such like things found only out of town.

Independently of the vending of these articles, there are many other ways of earning a penny among the street boys: among them are found—tumblers, mud-larks, water-jacks, Ethiopians, ballad-singers, bagpipe boys, the variety of street musicians (especially Italian boys with organs), Billingsgate boys or young "roughs," Covent Garden boys, porters, and shoeblacks (a class recently increased by the Ragged School Brigade). A great many lads are employed also in giving away the cards and placards of advertising and puffing tradesmen, and around the theatres are children of both sexes (along with a few old people) offering play-bills for sale, but this is an occupation less pursued than formerly, as some managers sell their own bills inside the house and do not allow any to pass from the hands of the printer into those of the former vendors. Again: amid the employments of this class may be mentioned—the going on errands and carrying parcels for persons accidentally met with; holding horses; sweeping crossings (but the best crossings are usually in the possession of adults); carrying trunks for any railway traveller to or from the terminus, and carrying them from an omnibus when the passenger is not put down at his exact destination. During the frosty days of the winter and early spring, some of these little fellows used to run along the foot-path—Baker-street was a favourite place for this display—and keep pace with the omnibuses, not merely by using their legs briskly, but by throwing themselves every now and then on their hands and progressing a few steps (so to speak) with their feet in the air. This was done to attract attention and obtain the preference if a job were in prospect; done, too, in hopes of a halfpenny being given the urchin for his agility. I looked at the hands of one of these little fellows and the fleshy parts of the palm were as hard as soling-leather, as hard, indeed, as the soles of the child's feet, for he was bare-footed. At the doors of the theatres, and of public places generally, boys are always in waiting to secure a cab from the stand, their best harvest being when the night has "turned out wet" after a fine day. Boys wait for the same purpose, lounging all night, and until the place closes, about the night-houses, casinos, saloons, &c., and sometimes without receiving a penny. There are, again, the very many ways in which street boys employed to "help" other people, when temporary help is needed, as when a cabman must finish the

cleaning of his vehicle in a hurry, or when a porter finds himself over-weighted in his truck. Boys are, moreover, the common custodians of the donkeys on which young ladies take invigorating exercise in such places as Hampstead-heath and Blackheath. At pigeon-shooting matches they are in readiness to pick up the dead birds, and secure the poor fluttering things which are "hard hit" by the adventurous sportsman, without having been killed. They have their share again in the picking of currants and gooseberries, the potting of strawberries, in weeding, &c., &c., and though the younger children may be little employed in haymaking, or in the more important labours of the corn harvest, they have their shares, both with and without the company of their parents, in the "hopping." In fine there is no business carried on to any extent in the streets, or in the open air, but it will be found that boys have their portion. Thus they are brought into contact with all classes; another proof of what I have advanced touching the importance of this subject.

It will be perceived that, under this head, I have had to speak far more frequently of boys than of girls, for the boy is far more the child of the streets than is the girl. The female child can do little but *sell* (when a livelihood is to be gained without a recourse to immorality); the boy can not only sell, but *work*.

The many ramifications of child-life and of child-work in our teeming streets, which I have just enumerated, render it difficult to arrive at a very nice estimation of the *earnings of the street boys and girls*. The gains of this week are not necessarily the gains of the next; there is the influence of the weather; there may be a larger or a smaller number of hands "taking a turn" at any particular calling this week than in its predecessor; and, above all, there is that concatenation of circumstances, which street-sellers include in one expressive word—"luck." I mean the opportunities to earn a few pence, which on some occasions present themselves freely, and at others do not occur at all. Such "luck," however, is more felt by the holders of horses, and the class of waiters upon opportunity (so to speak), than by those who depend upon trade.

I believe, however, both in consequence of what I have observed, and from the concurrent testimony of persons familiar with the child-life of London streets, that the earnings of the children, when they are healthful and active, are about the same in the several capacities they exercise. The waiter on opportunity, the lad "on the look-out for a job," may wait and look out all day bootlessly, but in the evening some fortunate chance may realize him "a whole tanner all in a lump." In like manner, the water-cress girl may drudge on from early morning until "cresses" are wanted for tea, and, with "a connection," and a tolerably regular demand, earn no more than the boy's 6d., and probably not so much.

One of the most profitable callings of the street-child is in the sale of Christmasing, but that is only for a very brief season; the most regular



STREET-SELLER OF BIRDS'-NESTS.

returns in the child's trade, are in the sale of such things as water-cresses, or any low-priced article of daily consumption, wherever the youthful vendor may be known.

I find it necessary to place the earnings of the street-children higher than those of the aged and infirm. The children are more active, more persevering, and perhaps more impudent. They are less deterred by the weather, and can endure more fatigue in walking long distances than old people. This, however, relates to the boys more especially, some of whom are very sturdy fellows.

The oranges which the street-children now vend at two a-penny, leave them a profit of 4*d.* in the shilling. To take 1*s.* 6*d.* with a profit of 6*d.* is a fair day's work; to take 1*s.* with a profit of 4*d.* is a poor day's work. The dozen bunches of cut-flowers which a girl will sell on an average day at 1*d.* a bunch, cost her 6*d.*, that sum being also her profit. These things supply, I think, a fair criterion. The children's profits may be 6*d.* a day, and including Sunday trade, 3*s.* 6*d.* a week; but with the drawbacks of bad weather, they cannot be computed at more than 2*s.* 6*d.* a week the year through. The boys may earn 2*d.* or 3*d.* a week on an average more than the girls, except in such things (which I shall specify under the next head) as seem more particularly suited for female traffic.

Of the causes which influence children to follow this or that course of business when a street career has been their choice or their lot, I have little to say. It seems quite a matter of chance, even where a preference may exist. A runaway lad meets with a comrade who perhaps sells fuzees, and he accordingly begins on fuzees. One youth, of whom I have given an account (but he was not of child's estate), began his street career on fly-papers. When children are sent into the streets to sell on account of their parents, they, of course, vend just what their parents have supplied to them. If "on their own hook," they usually commence their street career on what it is easiest to buy and easiest to sell; a few nuts or oranges bought in Duke's-place, lucifer-boxes, or small wares. As their experience increases they may become general street-sellers. The duller sort will continue to carry on the trades that any one with ordinary lungs and muscles can pursue. "All a fellow wants to know to sell potatoes," said a master street-seller to me, "is to tell how many tanners make a bob, and how many yenaps a tanner." [How many sixpences make a shilling, and how many pence a sixpence.] The smarter and bolder lads ripen into patterers, or street-performers, or fall into theft. For the class of adventurous runaways, the patterer's, or, rather, the paper-working patterer's life, with its alternations of town and country, fairs and hangings, the bustle of race-grounds and the stillness of a village, has great attractions. To a patterer and chaunting career, moreover, there is the stimulus of that love of approbation and of admiration, as strong among the often penniless professionals of the streets as on the boards of the opera house.

Perhaps there is not a child of either sex, now a street-seller, who would not to-morrow, if they thought they could clear a penny or two a day more by it, quit their baskets of oranges and sell candle-ends, or old bones, or anything. In a street career, and most especially when united with a lodging-house existence, there is no daintiness of the senses and no exercise of the tastes: the question is not "What do I like best to sell?" but "What is likely to pay me best?" This cannot be wondered at; for if a child earn but 5*d.* a day on apples, and can make 6*d.* on onions, its income is increased by 20 per cent.

The trades which I have specified as in the hands of street-children are carried on by both sexes. I do not know that even the stock in trade which most taxes the strength is more a boy's than a girl's pursuit. A basket of oranges or of apples is among the heaviest of all the stocks hawked by children; and in those pursuits there are certainly as many, or rather more, girls than boys. Such articles as fly-papers, money-bags, tins, fuzees, and Christmasing, are chiefly the boys' sale; cut-flowers, lavender, water-cresses, and small wares, are more within the trading of the girls.

The callings with which children do not meddle are those which require "patter." Some of the boys very glibly announce their wares, and may be profuse now and then in commendations of their quality, cheapness, and superiority, but it requires a longer experience to patter according to the appreciation of a perhaps critical street audience. No child, for instance, ventures upon the sale of grease-removing compositions, corn-salve, or the "Trial and Execution of Thomas Drory," with an "Affecting Copy of Werses."

A gentleman remarked to me that it was rather curious that boys' playthings, such as marbles and tops, were not hawked by street juveniles, who might be very well able to recommend them. I do not remember to have seen any such things vended by children.

Education is, as far as I have been able to ascertain, more widely extended among street children than it was twelve or fifteen years ago. The difficulty in arriving at any conclusion on such a subject is owing to the inability to find any one who knew, or could even form a tolerably accurate judgment of what was the state of education among these juveniles even twelve years back.

Perhaps it may be sufficiently correct to say that among a given number of street children, where, a dozen years ago, you met twenty who could read, you will now meet upwards of thirty. Of sixteen children, none apparently fifteen years of age, whom I questioned on the subject, nine admitted that they could not read; the other seven declared that they could, but three annexed to the avowal the qualifying words—"a little." Ten were boys and six were girls, and I spoke to them promiscuously as I met them in the street. Two were Irish lads, who were "working" oranges in company, and the bigger answered—"Shure, thin, we

can read, your honour, sir." I have little doubt that they could, but in all probability, had either of those urchins thought he would be a penny the better by it, he would have professed, to a perfect stranger, that he had a knowledge of algebra. "Yis, sir, I do, thin," would very likely be his response to any such inquiry; and when told he could not possibly know anything about it, he would answer, "Arrah, thin, but I didn't understand your honour."

To the Ragged Schools is, in all probability, owing this extension of the ability to read. It appears that the attendance of the street children at the Ragged School is most uncertain; as, indeed, must necessarily be the case where the whole time of the lad is devoted to obtaining a subsistence. From the best information I can collect, it appears that the average attendance of these boys at these schools does not exceed two hours per week, so that the amount of education thus acquired, if education it may be called, must necessarily be scanty in the extreme; and is frequently forgotten as soon as learned.

With many of these little traders a natural shrewdness compensates in some measure for the deficiency of education, and enables them to carry on their variety of trades with readiness and dexterity, and sometimes with exactness. One boy with whom I had a conversation, told me that he never made any mistake about the "coppers," although, as I subsequently discovered, he had no notion at all of arithmetic beyond the capability of counting how many pieces of coin he had, and how much copper money was required to make a "tanner" or a "bob." This boy vended coat-studs: he had also some metal collars for dogs, or as he said, "for cats aither." These articles he purchased at the same shop in Houndsditch, where "there was a wonderful lot of other things to be had, on'y some on 'em cost more money."

In speaking of money, the slang phrases are constantly used by the street lads; thus a sixpence is a "tanner;" a shilling a "bob," or a hog;" a crown is "a bull;" a half-crown "a half bull," &c. Little, as a modern writer has remarked, do the persons using these phrases know of their remote and somewhat classical origin, which may, indeed, be traced to the period antecedent to that when monarchs monopolized the surface of coined money with their own images and superscriptions. They are identical with the very name of money among the early Romans, which was *pecunia*, from *pecus*, a flock. The collections of coin dealers amply show, that the figure of a hog was anciently placed on a small silver coin, and that that of a bull decorated larger ones of the same metal: these coins were frequently deeply crossed on the reverse: this was for the convenience of easily breaking them into two or more pieces, should the bargain for which they were employed require it, and the parties making it had no smaller change handy to complete the transaction. Thus we find that the "half-bull" of the itinerant street-seller or "traveller," so far from being a phrase of modern invention, as is generally supposed, is in point of

fact referable to an era extremely remote. Numerous other instances might be given of the classical origin of many of the flash or slang words used by these people.

I now give the answers I received from two boys. The first, his mother told me, was the best scholar at his school when he was there, and before he had to help her in street sale. He was a pale, and not at all forward boy, of thirteen or fourteen, and did not appear much to admire being questioned. He had not been to a Ragged School, but to an "academy" kept by an old man. He did not know what the weekly charge was, but when father was living (he died last autumn) the schoolmaster used to take it out in vegetables. Father was a costermonger; mother minded all about his schooling, and master often said she behaved to him like a lady. "God," this child told me, "was our Heavenly Father, and the maker of all things; he knew everything and everybody; he knew people's thoughts and every sin they committed if no one else knew it. His was the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen. Jesus Christ was our Lord and Saviour; he was the son of God, and was crucified for our sins. He was a God himself." [The child understood next to nothing of the doctrine of the Trinity, and I did not press him.] "The Scriptures, which were the Bible and Testament, were the Word of God, and contained nothing but what was good and true. If a boy lied, or stole, or committed sins," he said, "he would be punished in the next world, which endured for ever and ever, Amen. It was only after death, when it was too late to repent, that people went to the next world. He attended chapel, sometimes."

As to mundane matters, the boy told me that Victoria was Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. She was born May 24, 1819, and succeeded his late Majesty, King William IV., July 20, 1837. She was married to his Royal Highness Prince Albert, &c., &c. France was a different country to this: he had heard there was no king or queen there, but didn't understand about it. You couldn't go to France by land, no more than you could to Ireland. Didn't know anything of the old times in history; hadn't been told. Had heard of the battle of Waterloo; the English licked. Had heard of the battle of Trafalgar, and of Lord Nelson; didn't know much about him; but there was his pillar at Charing-cross, just by the candlesticks (fountains). When I spoke of astronomy, the boy at once told me he knew nothing about it. He had heard that the earth went round the sun, but from what he'd noticed, shouldn't have thought it. He didn't think that the sun went round the earth, it seemed to go more sideways. Would like to read more, if he had time, but he had a few books, and there was hundreds not so well off as he was.

I am far from undervaluing, indeed I would not indulge in an approach to a scoff, at the extent of this boy's knowledge. Many a man who piques himself on the plenitude of his breeches' pocket, and who attributes his success in life to the fullness

of his knowledge, knows no more of Nature, Man, and God, than this poor street child.

Another boy, perhaps a few months older, gave me his notions of men and things. He was a thick-limbed, red-cheeked fellow; answered very freely, and sometimes, when I could not help laughing at his replies, laughed loudly himself, as if he entered into the joke.

Yes, he had heer'd of God who made the world. Couldn't exactly recollect when he'd heer'd on him, but he had, most sarten-ly. Didn't know when the world was made, or how anybody could do it. It must have taken a long time. It was afore his time, "or yourn either, sir." Knew there was a book called the Bible; didn't know what it was about; didn't mind to know; knew of such a book to a sartinty, because a young 'oman took one to pop (pawn) for an old 'oman what was on the spree—a bran new 'un—but the cove wouldn't have it, and the old 'oman said he might be d—d. Never heer'd tell on the deluge; of the world having been drowned; it couldn't, for there wasn't water enough to do it. He weren't a going to fret hisself for such things as that. Didn't know what happened to people after death, only that they was buried. Had seen a dead body laid out; was a little afeared at first; poor Dick looked so different, and when you touched his face, he was so cold! oh, so cold! Had heer'd on another world; wouldn't mind if he was there hisself, if he could do better; for things was often queer here. Had heered on it from a tailor—such a clever cove, a stunner—as went to 'Straliar (Australia), and heer'd him say he was going into another world. Had never heer'd of France, but had heer'd of Frenchmen; there wasn't half a quarter so many on 'em as of Italians, with their earrings like flash gals. Didn't dislike foreigners, for he never saw none. What was they? Had heer'd of Ireland. Didn't know where it was, but it couldn't be very far, or such lots wouldn't come from there to London. Should say they walked it, aye, every bit of the way, for he'd seen them come in, all covered with dust. Had heer'd of people going to sea, and had seen the ships in the river, but didn't know nothing about it, for he was very seldom that way. The sun was made of fire, or it wouldn't make you feel so warm. The stars was fire, too, or they wouldn't shine. They didn't make it warm, they was too small. Didn't know any use they was of. Didn't know how far they was off; a jolly lot higher than the gas lights some on 'em was. Was never in a church; had heer'd they worshipped God there; didn't know how it was done; had heer'd singing and playing inside when he'd passed; never was there, for he had'nt no togs to go in, and wouldn't be let in among such swells as he had seen coming out. Was a ignorant chap, for he'd never been to school, but was up to many a move, and didn't do bad. Mother said he would make his fortin yet.

Had heer'd of the Duke of Wellington; he was Old Nosey; didn't think he ever seed him, but had seed his statty. Hadn't heer'd of the battle of Waterloo, nor who it was atween; once

lived in Webber-row, Waterloo-road. Thought he had heerd speak of Buonaparte; didn't know what he was; thought he had heer'd of Shakespeare, but didn't know whether he was alive or dead, and didn't care. A man with something like that name kept a dolly and did stunning; but he was sich a hard cove that if he was dead it wouldn't matter. Had seen the Queen, but didn't recollect her name just at the minute; oh! yes, Victoria and Albert. Had no notion what the Queen had to do. Should think she hadn't such power [he had first to ask me what 'power' was] as the Lord Mayor, or as Mr. Norton as was the Lambeth beak, and perhaps is still. Was never once before a beak and didn't want to. Hated the crushers; what business had they to interfere with him if he was only resting his basket in a street? Had been once to the Wick, and once to the Bower: liked tumbling better; he meant to have a little pleasure when the peas came in.

The knowledge and the ignorance of these two striplings represent that of street children generally. Those who may have run away from a good school, or a better sort of home as far as means constitute such betterness, of course form exceptions. So do the utterly stupid.

The Morals, Religion, and Opinions of the street-trading children are the next topic. Their business morals have been indicated in the course of my former statements, and in the general tone of the remarks and conversation of street-sellers.

As traders their morals may be lax enough. They give short weight, and they give short measure; they prick the juice out of oranges; and brush up old figs to declare they're new. Their silk braces are cotton, their buck-leather braces are wash-leather, their sponge is often rotten, and their salves and cures quackeries.

Speak to any one of the quicker-witted street-sellers on the subject, and though he may be unable to deny that his brother traders are guilty of these short-comings, he will justify them all by the example of shopkeepers. One man, especially, with whom I have more than once conversed on the subject, broadly asserts that as a whole the streets are in all matters of business honester than the shops. "It ain't *we*," runs the purport of his remarks, "as makes coffee out of sham chickory; it ain't *we* as makes cigars out of rhubarb leaves; *we* don't make duffers handkerchiefs, nor weave cotton things and call them silk. If *we* quacks a bit, does *we* make fortins by it as shopkeepers does with their ointments and pills! If *we* give slang weights, how many rich shopkeepers is fined for that there? And how many's never found out? And when one on 'em's fined, why he calculates how much he's into pocket, between what he's made by slanging, and what he's been fined, and on he goes again. *He* didn't know that there ever was short weight given in his shop: not *he*! No more do *we* at our stalls or barrows! Who 'dulterates the beer? Who makes old tea-leaves into new? Who grinds rice among pepper? And as for smuggling—but nobody thinks there's any harm in buying smuggled things. What *we* does is like that pencil you're



writing with to a great tree, compared to what the rich people does. O, don't tell me, sir, a gentleman like you that sees so much of what's going on, must know *we're* better than the shopkeepers are."

To remarks such as these I have nothing to answer. It would be idle to point out to such casuists, that the commission of one wrong can never justify another. The ignorant reverse the doctrine of right, and live, not by rule, but by example. I have unsparingly exposed the rogueries and trickeries of the street people, and it is but fair that one of them should be heard in explanation, if not in justification. The trade ethics of the adult street-folk are also those of the juveniles, so on this subject I need dwell no longer.

What I have said of the religion of the women street-sellers applies with equal truth to the children. Their religious feelings are generally formed for them by their parents, especially their mothers. If the children have no such direction, then they have no religion. I did not question the street-seller before quoted on this subject of the want of the Christian spirit among his fraternity, old or young, or he would at once have asked me, in substance, to tell him in what class of society the real Christian spirit was to be found?

As to the opinions of the street-children I can say little. For the most part they have formed no opinions of anything beyond what affects their daily struggles for bread. Of politics such children can know nothing. If they are anything, they are Chartists in feeling, and are in general honest haters of the police and of most constituted authorities, whom they often confound with the police officer. As to their opinions of the claims of friendship, and of the duty of assisting one another, I believe these children feel and understand nothing about such matters. The hard struggles of their lives, and the little sympathy they meet with, make them selfish. There may be companionship among them, but no friendship, and this applies, I think, alike to boys and girls. The boy's opinion of the girl seems to be that she is made to help *him*, or to supply gratification to his passions.

There is yet a difficult inquiry,—as to the opinions which are formed by the young females reared to a street-life. I fear that those opinions are not, and cannot be powerfully swayed in favour of chastity, especially if the street-girl have the quickness to perceive that marriage is not much honoured among the most numerous body of street-folk. If she have not the quickness to understand this, then her ignorance is in itself most dangerous to her virtue. She may hear, too, expressions of an opinion that "going to church to be wed" is only to put money into the clergyman's, or as these people say the "parson's," pocket. Without the watchful care of the mother, the poor girl may form an illicit connection, with little or no knowledge that she is doing wrong; and perhaps a kind and indulgent mother may be herself but a concubine, feeling little respect for a ceremony she did not scruple to dispense with. To such opinions, however, the Irish furnish the exception.

The Dwelling-places of the street-children are in the same localities as I specified regarding the women. Those who reside with their parents or employers sleep usually in the same room with them, and sometimes in the same bed. Nearly the whole of those, however, who support themselves by street-trade live, or rather sleep, in the lodging-houses. It is the same with those who live by street-vagrancy or begging, or by street-theft; and for this lazy or dishonest class of children the worst description of lodging-houses have the strongest attractions, as they meet continually with "tramps" from the country, and keep up a constant current of scheming and excitement.

It seems somewhat curious that, considering the filth and noisomeness of some of these lodging-houses, the children who are inmates suffer only the average extent of sickness and mortality common to the districts crammed with the poor. Perhaps it may be accounted for by the circumstance of their being early risers, and their being in the open air all day, so that they are fatigued at the close of the day, and their sleep is deep and unbroken. I was assured by a well-educated man, who was compelled to resort to such places, that he has seen children sleep most profoundly in a lodging-house throughout a loud and long-continued disturbance. Many street-children who are either "alone in the world," or afraid to return home after a bad day's sale, sleep in the markets or under the dry arches.

There are many other lads who, being unable to pay the 1*d.*, 2*d.*, or 3*d.* demanded, in prepayment, by the lodging-house keepers, pass the night in the streets, wherever shelter may be attainable. The number of outcast boys and girls who sleep in and about the purlieus of Covent Garden-market each night, especially during the summer months, has been computed variously, and no doubt differs according to circumstances; but those with whom I have spoken upon the subject, and who of all others are most likely to know, consider the average to be upwards of 200.

The Diet of the street-children is in some cases an alternation of surfeit and inanition, more especially that of the stripling who is "on his own hook." If money be unexpectedly attained, a boy will gorge himself with such dainties as he loves; if he earn no money, he will fast all day patiently enough, perhaps drinking profusely of water. A cake-seller told me that a little while before I saw him a lad of twelve or so had consumed a shilling's worth of cakes and pastry, as he had got a shilling by "fiddling;" not, he it understood, by the exercise of any musical skill, for "fiddling," among the initiated, means the holding of horses, or the performing of any odd jobs.

Of these cakes and pastry—the cakes being from two to twelve a penny, and the pastry, tarts, and "Coventrys" (three-cornered tarts) two a penny—the street-urchins are very fond. To me they seemed to possess no recommendation either to the nose or the palate. The "strong" flavour of

these preparations is in all probability as grateful to the palate of an itinerant youth, as is the high *gout* of the grouse or the woodcock to the fashionable epicure. In this respect, as in others which I have pointed out, the "extremes" of society "meet."

These remarks apply far more to the male than to the female children. Some of the street-boys will walk a considerable distance, when they are in funds, to buy pastry of the Jew-boys in the Minories, Houndsditch, and Whitechapel; those keen traders being reputed, and no doubt with truth, to supply the best cakes and pastry of any.

A more staple article of diet, which yet partakes of the character of a dainty, is in great demand by the class I treat of—pudding. A halfpenny or a penny-worth of baked plum, boiled plum (or plum dough), currant or plum batter (batter-pudding studded with raisins), is often a dinner. This pudding is almost always bought in the shops; indeed, in a street apparatus there could hardly be the necessary heat diffused over the surface required; and as I have told of a distance being travelled to buy pastry of the Jew-boys, so is it traversed to buy pudding at the best shops. The proprietor of one of those shops, upon whom I called to make inquiries, told me that he sold about 300 pennyworths of pudding in a day. Two-thirds of this quantity he sold to juveniles under fifteen years of age; but he hadn't noticed particularly, and so could only guess. This man, when he understood the object of my inquiry, insisted upon my tasting his "batter," which really was very good, and tasted—I do not know how otherwise to describe it—honest. His profits were not large, he said, and judging from the size and quality of his oblong halfpenny and pennyworth's of batter pudding, I have no doubt he stated the fact. "There's many a poor man and woman," he said, "aye, sir, and some that you would think from their appearance might go to an eating-house to dine, make a meal off my pudding, as well as the street little ones. The boys are often tiresome: 'Master,' they'll say, 'can't you give us a plummier bit than this?' or, 'Is it just up? I likes it 'ot, all 'ot.'"

The "baked tatur," from the street-dealer's can more frequently than from the shops, is another enjoyable portion of the street child's diet. Of the sale to the juvenile population of pickled whelks, stewed eels, oysters, boiled meat puddings, and other articles of street traffic, I have spoken under their respective heads.

The Irish children who live with their parents fare as the parents fare. If very poor, or if bent upon saving for some purpose, their diet is tea and bread and butter, or bread without butter. If not so very poor, still tea, &c., but sometimes with a little fish, and sometimes with a piece of meat on Sundays; but the Sunday's meat is more common among the poor English than the poor Irish street-traders; indeed the English street-sellers generally "live better" than the Irish. The coster-boys often fare well and abundantly.

The children living in the lodging-houses, I am informed, generally, partake only of such

meals as they can procure abroad. Sometimes of a night they may partake of the cheap beef or mutton, purveyed by some inmate who has been "lifting flesh" (stealing meat) or "sawney" (bacon). Vegetables, excepting the baked potato, they rarely taste. Of animal food, perhaps, they partake more of bacon, and relish it the most.

Drinking is not, from what I can learn, common among the street boys. The thieves are generally sober fellows, and of the others, when they are "in luck," a half-pint of beer, to relish the bread and saveloy of the dinner, and a pennyworth of gin "to keep the cold out," are often the extent of the potations. The exceptions are among the ignorant coster-lads, who when they have been prosperous in their "bunse," drink, and ape the vices of men. The girls, I am told, are generally fonder of gin than the boys. Elderwine and gingerbeer are less popular among children than they used to be. Many of the lads smoke.

The Amusements of the street-children are such as I have described in my account of the costermongers, but in a moderate degree, as those who partake with the greatest zest of such amusements as the Penny Gaff (penny theatre) and the Twopenny Hop (dance) are more advanced in years. Many of the Penny Gaffs, however, since I last wrote on the subject, have been suppressed, and the Twopenny Hops are not half so frequent as they were five or six years back. The Jew-boys of the streets play at draughts or dominoes in coffee-shops which they frequent; in one in the London-road at which I had occasion to call were eight of these urchins thus occupied; and they play for money or its equivalent, but these sedentary games obtain little among the other and more restless street-lads. I believe that not one-half of them "know the cards," but they are fond of gambling at pitch and toss, for halfpennies or farthings.

The Clothing of the street-children, however it may vary in texture, fashion, and colour, has one pervading characteristic—it is never made for the wearers. The exceptions to this rule seem to be those, when a child has run away and retains, through good fortune or natural acuteness, the superior attire he wore before he made the choice—if choice he had—of a street life; and where the pride of a mother whose costermonger husband is "getting on," clothes little Jack or Bill in a new Sunday suit. Even then the suit is more likely to be bought ready-made than "made to measure," nor is it worn in business hours until the gloss of novelty has departed.

The boys and girls wear every variety of clothing; it is often begged, but if bought is bought from the fusty stocks of old clothes in Petticoat and Rosemary-lanes. These rags are worn by the children as long as they will hold, or can be tied or pinned together, and when they drop off from continued wear, from dirt, and from the ravages of vermin, the child sets his wits to work to procure more. One mode of obtaining a fresh supply is far less available than it was three or four years back. This was for the lads to denude

themselves of their rags, and tearing them up in the casual-ward of a workhouse, as it were compel the parish-officers to provide them with fresh apparel.

This mode may be successful in parts of the country still, but it is not so, or to a very limited extent, in town. The largest, and what was accounted by the vagrants the most liberal, of all the casual wards of the metropolitan workhouses, that of Marylebone, has been closed above two years. So numerous were the applicants for admission, and so popular among the vagrants was Marylebone workhouse, that a fever resulted, and attacked that large establishment. It was not uncommon for the Irish who trudged up from Liverpool, to be advised by some London vagrant whom they met, to go at once, when they reached the capital, to Marylebone workhouse, and that the Irishman might not forget a name that was new to him, his friendly adviser would write it down for him, and a troop of poor wretched Irish children, with parents as wretched, would go to Marylebone workhouse, and in their ignorance or simplicity, present the address which had been given to them, as if it were a regular order for admission! Boys have sometimes committed offences that they might get into prison, and as they contrived that their apparel should be unfit for purposes of decency, or perhaps their rags had become unfit to wear, they could not be sent naked into the streets again, and so had clothing given to them. A shirt will be worn by one of those wretched urchins, without washing, until it falls asunder, and many have no shirts. The girls are on the whole less ragged than the boys, the most disgusting parts of their persons or apparel—I speak here more of the vagrant or the mixed vagrant trading and selling girl (often a child prostitute) than of the regular street-seller—the worst particular of these girls' appearance, I repeat, is in their foul and matted hair, which looks as if it would defy sponge, comb, and brush to purify it, and in the broken and filthy boots and stockings, which they seem never to button or to garter.

The Propensities of the street-children are the last division of my inquiry, and an ample field is presented, alike for wonder, disgust, pity, hope, and regret.

Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of these wretched children is their extraordinary licentiousness. Nothing can well exceed the extreme animal fondness for the opposite sex which prevails amongst them; some rather singular circumstances connected with this subject have come to my knowledge, and from these facts it would appear that the age of puberty, or something closely resembling it, may be attained at a much less numerical amount of years than that at which most writers upon the human species have hitherto fixed it. Probably such circumstances as the promiscuous sleeping together of both sexes, the example of the older persons indulging in the grossest immorality in the presence of the young, and the use of obscene expressions, may tend to

produce or force an unnatural precocity, a precocity sure to undermine health and shorten life. Jealousy is another characteristic of these children, and perhaps less among the girls than the boys. Upon the most trivial offence in this respect, or on the suspicion of an offence, the "gals" are sure to be beaten cruelly and savagely by their "chaps." This appears to be a very common case.

The details of filthiness and of all uncleanness which I gave in a recent number as things of course in certain lodging-houses, render it unnecessary to dwell longer upon the subject, and it is one from which I willingly turn to other matters.

In addition to the licentious, the vagabond propensities of this class are very striking. As soon as the warm weather commences, boys and girls, but more especially boys, leave the town in shoals, traversing the country in every direction; some furnished with trifling articles (such as I have already enumerated) to sell, and others to begging, lurking, or thieving. It is not the street-sellers who so much resort to the tramp, as those who are devoid of the commonest notions of honesty; a quality these young vagrants sometimes respect when in fear of a gaol, and the hard work with which such a place is identified in their minds—and to which, with the peculiar idiosyncrasy of a roving race, they have an insuperable objection.

I have met with boys and girls, however, to whom a gaol had no terrors, and to whom, when in prison, there was only one dread, and that a common one among the ignorant, whether with or without any sense of religion—superstition. "I lay in prison of a night, sir," said a boy who was generally among the briskest of his class, "and think I shall see things." The "things" represent the vague fears which many, not naturally stupid, but untaught or ill-taught persons, entertain in the dark. A girl, a perfect termagant in the breaking of windows and such like offences, told me something of the same kind. She spoke well of the treatment she experienced in prison, and seemed to have a liking for the matron and officials; her conduct there was quiet and respectful. I believe she was not addicted to drink.

Many of the girls, as well as the boys, of course trade as they "tramp." They often sell, both in the country and in town, little necklaces, composed of red berries strung together upon thick thread, for dolls and children: but although I have asked several of them, I have never yet found one who collected the berries and made the necklaces themselves; neither have I met with a single instance in which the girl vendors knew the name of the berries thus used, nor indeed even that they were berries. The invariable reply to my questions upon this point has been that they "are called necklaces;" that "they are just as they sells 'em to us;" that they "don't know whether they are made or whether they grow;" and in most cases, that they "gets them in London, by Shoreditch;" although in one case a little brown-complexioned girl, with bright sparkling eyes, said that "she got them from the gipsies."

At first I fancied, from this child's appearance, that she was rather superior in intellect to most of her class; but I soon found that she was not a whit above the others, unless, indeed, it were in the possession of the quality of cunning.

Some of the boys, on their country excursions, trade in dominoes. They carry a variety of boxes, each differing in size and varying accordingly in price: the lowest-priced boxes are mostly 6*d.* each (sometimes 4*d.*, or even 3*d.*), the highest 1*s.* An informant told me that these boxes are charged to him at the rate of 20 to 25 per cent. less; but if, as is commonly the case, he could take a number at a time, he would have them at a smaller price still. They are very rudely made, and soon fall to pieces, unless handled with extreme care. Most of the boys who vend this article play at the game themselves, and some with skill; but in every case, I believe, there is a willingness to cheat, or take advantage, which is hardly disguised; one boy told me candidly that those who make the most money are considered to be the cleverest, whether by selling or cheating, or both, at the game; nor can it be said that this estimation of cleverness is peculiar to these children.

At this season of the year great numbers of the street-children attend the races in different parts of the country, more especially at those in the vicinity of a large town. The race-course of Wolverhampton, for instance, is usually thronged with them during the period of the sport. While taking these perigrinations they sometimes sleep in the low lodging-houses with which most of our provincial towns abound: frequently "skipper it" in the open air, when the weather is fine and warm, and occasionally in barns or outhouses attached to farms and cottages. Sometimes they travel in couples—a boy and a girl, or two boys or two girls; but the latter is not so common a case as either of the former. It is rare that more than two may be met in company with each other, except, indeed, of a night, and then they usually herd together in numbers. The boys who carry dominoes sometimes, also, have a sheet of paper for sale, on which is rudely printed a representation of a draught-board and men—the latter of which are of two colours (black and white) and may be cut out with a pair of scissors; thus forming a ready means of playing a game so popular in rustic places. These sheets of paper are sold (if no more can be got for them) at a penny each. The boy who showed them to me said he gave a halfpenny a piece for them, or 6*d.* for fifteen. He said he always bought them in London, and that he did not know any other place to get them at, nor had "ever heard any talk of their being bought nowhere else."

The extraordinary lasciviousness of this class which I have already mentioned, appears to continue to mark their character during their vagabondizing career in the country as fully as in town; indeed, an informant, upon whom I think I may rely, says, that the nightly scenes of youthful or even childish profligacy in the low lodging-houses of the small provincial towns quite equal

—even if they do not exceed—those which may be witnessed in the metropolis itself. Towards the approach of winter these children (like the vagrants of an older growth) advance towards London; some remain in the larger towns, such as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, &c., but the greater proportion appear to return to the metropolis, where they resume the life they had previously led, anything but improved in education, morals, manners, or social position generally, by their summer's excursion.

The language spoken by this rambling class is peculiar in its construction: it consists of an odd medley of cockneyfied English, rude provincialisms, and a large proportion of the slang commonly used by gipsies and other "travellers," in conveying their ideas to those whom they wish to purchase their commodities.

Among the propensities of the street-boys I do not think that pugnacity, or a fondness, or even a great readiness, for fighting, is a predominant element. Gambling and thieving may be rife among a class of these poor wretches; and it may not unfrequently happen that force is resorted to by one boy bigger than another to obtain the halfpence of which the smaller child is known to be possessed. Thus quarrels among them are very frequent, but they rarely lead to fighting. Even in the full swing and fury of their jealousy, it does not appear that these boys attack the object of their suspicions, but prefer the less hazardous course of chastising the delinquent or unjustly suspected girl. The girls in the low lodging-houses, I was told a little time since, by a woman who used to frequent them, sometimes, not often, scratched one another until the two had bloody faces; and they tried to bite one another now and then, but they seldom fought. What was this poor woman's notion of a fight between two girls, it may not be very easy to comprehend.

The number of children out daily in the streets of London, employed in the various occupations I have named, together with others which may possibly have been overlooked—including those who beg without offering any article for sale—those who will work as light porters, as errand boys and the like, for chance passengers, has been variously calculated; probably nothing like exactitude can be hoped for, much less expected, in such a speculation, for when a government census has been so frequently found to fail in correctness of detail, it appears highly improbable that the number of those so uncertain in their places of resort and so migratory in their habits, can be ascertained with anything like a definite amount of certainty by a private individual. Taking the returns of accommodation afforded to these children in the casual wards of workhouses, refuges for the destitute and homeless poor; of the mendicity and other societies of a similar description, and those of our hospitals and gaols,—and these sources of information upon this subject can alone be confidently relied upon,—and then taking into the calculation the additional numbers, who pass the night in the variety of ways I have already enumerated, I think it will be found that the

or separately, to sell lucifer-matches or small wares. "*They like it,*" she said, "*and always want to be off into the streets;*" and when my husband (a labourer) was ill in the hospital, the few pence they brought in was very useful; but now he's well and at work again and we want to send the eldest—she's nine—to school; *but they all will go out to sell if they can get hold of any stock.* I would never have sent them at all if I could have helped it, but if they made 6d. a day among the three of them, perhaps it saved their lives when things were at the worst." If a poor woman, as in this instance, has not been used to street-selling herself, there is always some neighbour to advise her what to purchase for her children's hawking, and instruct her where.

From one little girl I had the following account. She was then selling boot-laces and offered them most perseveringly. She was turned nine, she said, and had sold things in the streets for two years past, but not regularly. The father got his living in the streets by "playing;" she seemed reluctant to talk about his avocation, but I found that he was sometimes a street-musician, or street-performer, and sometimes sung or recited in public houses, and having "seen better days," had it appears communicated some feeling of dislike for his present pursuits to his daughter, so that I discontinued any allusion to the subject. The mother earned 2s. or 2s. 6d. weekly, in shoe-binding, when she had employment, which was three weeks out of four, and a son of thirteen earned what was sufficient to maintain him as an (occasional) assistant in a wholesale pottery, or rather pot-shop.

"It's in the winter, sir, when things are far worst with us. Father can make very little then—but I don't know what he earns exactly at any time—and though mother has more work then, there's fire and candle to pay for. We were very badly off last winter, and worse, I think, the winter before. Father sometimes came home and had made nothing, and if mother had no work in hand we went to bed to save fire and candle, if it was ever so soon. Father would die afore he would let mother take as much as a loaf from the parish. I was sent out to sell nuts first: 'If it's only 1d. you make,' mother said, 'it's a good piece of bread.' I didn't mind being sent out. I knew children that sold things in the streets. Perhaps I liked it better than staying at home without a fire and with nothing to do, and if I went out I saw other children busy. No, I wasn't a bit frightened when I first started, not a bit. Some children—but they was such little things—said: 'O, Liz, I wish I was you.' I had twelve ha'porths and sold them all. I don't know what it made; 2d. most likely. I didn't crack a single nut myself. I was fond of them then, but I don't care for them now. I could do better if I went into public-houses, but I'm only let go to Mr. Smith's, because he knows father, and Mrs. Smith and him recommends me and wouldn't let anybody mislest me. Nobody ever offered to. I hear people swear there sometimes, but it's not at me. I sell nuts to children in the streets, and laces to young women. I have

sold nuts and oranges to soldiers. They never say anything rude to me, never. I was once in a great crowd, and was getting crushed, and there was a very tall soldier close by me, and he lifted me, basket and all, right up to his shoulder, and carried me clean out of the crowd. He had stripes on his arm. 'I shouldn't like you to be in such a trade,' says he, 'if you was my child.' He didn't say why he wouldn't like it. Perhaps because it was beginning to rain. Yes, we are far better off now. Father makes money. I don't go out in bad weather in the summer; in the winter, though, I must. I don't know what I make. I don't know what I shall be when I grow up. I can read a little. I've been to church five or six times in my life. I should go oftener and so would mother, if we had clothes."

I have no reason to suppose that in this case the father was an intemperate man, though some of the parents who thus send their children out *are* intemperate, and, loving to indulge in the idleness to which intemperance inclines them, are forced to live on the labour of their wives and children.

OF A "NEGLECTED" CHILD, A STREET-SELLER.

OF this class perhaps there is less to be said than of others. Drunken parents allow their children to run about the streets, and often to shift for themselves. If such parents have any sense of shame, unextinguished by their continued besottedness, they may feel relieved by not having their children before their eyes, for the very sight of them is a reproach, and every rag about such helpless beings must carry its accusation to a mind not utterly callous.

Among such children there is not, perhaps, that extreme pressure of wretchedness or of privation that there is among the orphans, or the utterly deserted. If a "neglected child" have to shift, wholly or partly, for itself, it is perhaps with the advantage of a shelter; for even the bare room of the drunkard is in some degree a shelter or roof. There is not the nightly need of 2d. for a bed, or the alternative of the Adelphi arches for nothing.

I met with one little girl ten or eleven years of age, whom some of the street-sellers described to me as looking out for a job every now and then. She was small-featured and dark-eyed, and seemed intelligent. Her face and hands were brown as if from exposure to the weather, and a lack of soap; but her dress was not dirty. Her father she described as a builder, probably a bricklayer's labourer, but he could work, she said, at drains or such like. "Mother's been dead a long time," the child continued, "and father brought another woman home and told me to call her mother, but she soon went away. I works about the streets, but only when there's nothing to eat at home. Father gets drunk sometimes, but I think not so oft as he did, and then he lies in bed. No, sir, not all day, but he gets up and goes out and gets more drink, and comes back and goes to bed again. He never uses me badly. When he's drinking and has money, he gives me some now and then to get bread and butter with, or a halfpenny pudding; he never eats anything

in the house when he's drinking, and he's a very quiet man. Sometimes he's laid in bed two or three days and nights at a time. I goes to school when father has money. We lives very well then. I've kept myself for a whole week. I mind people's stalls, if they're away a bit, and run for them if they're wanted; and I go errands. I've carried home flower-pots for a lady. I've got a halfpenny on a day, and a penny, and some bread perhaps, and I've lived on that. I should like very well to have a pitch of my own. *I think I should like that better than place.* But I have a sister who has a place in the country; she's far older than I am, and perhaps I shall get one. But father's at work now, and he says he'll take the pledge. Five or six times I've sold oranges, and ingans as well, and carried the money to Mrs. —, who gave me all I took above 4d. for myself."

It could surprise no one if a child so neglected became so habituated to a street life, that she could not adapt herself to any other. I heard of other children thus or similarly neglected, but boys far more frequently than girls, who traded regularly in apples, oranges, &c., on their own account. Some have become regular street-sellers, and even in childhood have abandoned their homes and supported themselves.

OF A HIRED COSTER BOY.

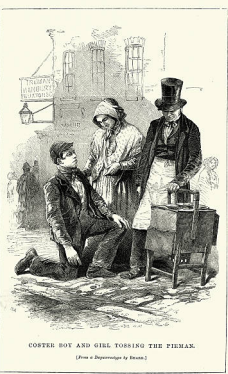
ONE shell-fish seller, who has known street-commerce and street-folk for many years, thought, although he only hazarded an opinion, that there was less drinking among the young costers, and less swearing, than he had known in a preceding generation.

A young coster boy living with his parents, who had a good business, told me that he would never be nothing but a "general dealer," (which among some of these people is the "genteel" designation for a costermonger,) as long as he lived, unless, indeed, he rose to a coal shed and a horse and cart; a consummation, perhaps with the addition of a green-grocery, a fried fish, and a gingerbeer trade, not unfrequently arrived at by the more prudent costermongers. This boy could neither read nor write; he had been sent to school, and flogged to school (he grinned as he told me) by his mother, who said his father wouldn't have been "done" so often by fine folks, when he sold "grass" (asparagus) and such things as cost money, if he could have kept 'count. But his father only laughed, and said nothing, when the boy "cut away" from school, which he did so continuously, that the schoolmaster at length declined the charge of the young coster's further education. This stripling, who was about fourteen, seemed very proud of a pair of good half-boots which his mother had bought him, and which he admired continually as he glanced at his feet. His parents, from his account, were indulgent, and when they got farthings in change or in any manner, kept them for him; and so he got treats, and smart things to wear now and then. "We expects to do well," he said, for he used the "we" when he spoke of

his parents' business, "when it's peas and new potatoes, cheap enough to cry. It's my dodge to cry. I know a man as says, 'May month ought to be ashamed on itself, or things 'ud a been herlier.' Last week I sung out, it was the same man's dodge, he put me up to it—'Here's your Great Exhibition mackarel.' People laughed, but it weren't no great good. I've been to Penny Gaffs, but not this goodish bit. I likes the singing best as has a stunnin chorus. There's been a deal of hard up lately among people as is general dealers. Things is getting better, I think, and they must. It wouldn't do at all if they didn't. It's no use your a-asking me about what I thinks of the Queen or them sort of people, for I knows nothing about them, and never goes among them."

The Hired boys, for the service of the costermongers, whether hired for the day, or more permanently, are very generally of the classes I have spoken of. When the New Cut, Lambeth, was a great street-market, every morning, during the height of the vegetable and fruit seasons, lads used to assemble in Hooper-street, Short-street, York-street, and, indeed, in all the smaller streets or courts, which run right and left from the "two Cuts." When the costermonger started thence, perhaps "by the first light," to market, these boys used to run up to his barrow, "D'you want me, Jack?" or, "Want a boy, Bill?" being their constant request. It is now the same, in the localities where the costermongers live, or where they keep their ponies, donkeys, and barrows, and whence they emerge to market. It is the same at Billingsgate and the other markets at which these traders make their wholesale purchases. Boys wait about these marts "to be hired," or, as they may style it, to "see if they're wanted." When hired, there is seldom any "wage" specified, the lads seeming always willing to depend upon the liberality of the costermonger, and often no doubt with an eye to the chances of "bunse." A sharp lad thus engaged, who may acquit himself to a costermonger's liking, perhaps continues some time in the same man's employ. I may observe, that in this gathering, and for such a purpose, there is a resemblance to the simple proceedings of the old times, when around the market cross of the nearest town assembled the population who sought employment, whether in agricultural or household labour. In some parts of the north of England these gatherings are still held at the two half-yearly terms of May-day and Martinmas.

A lad of thirteen or fourteen, who did not look very strong, gave me the following account: "I helps, you see, sir, where I can, for mother (who sells sheep's-trotters) depends a deal on her trotters, but they're not great bread for an old 'oman, and there's me and Neddy to keep. Father's abroad and a soger. Do I know he is? Mother says so, sir. I looks out every morning when the costermongers starts for the markets, and wants boys for their barrows. I cried roots last: 'Here's your musks, ha'penny each. Here's yer all agro'in' and all a blo'in.' I got my grub and 3d. I takes the tin home. If there's a cabbage or two left,



COSTER BOY AND GIRL TENDING THE FIRE.

(From a drawing by H. H. H.)

I've had it guv to me. *I likes that work better nor school. I should think so. One sees life.* Well, I don't know wot one sees perticler; but it's wot people calls life. I was a week at school once. I has a toss up sometimes when I has a odd copper for it. I'ven't 'ad any rig'lar work as yet. I shall p'raps when it's real summer." [Said, May 24th.] "This is the Queen's birthday, is it, sir? Werry likely, but she's nothing to me. I can't read, in coorse not, after a week's schooling. Yes, I likes a show. Punch is stunnin', but they might make more on the dog. I would if I was a Punch. O, I has tea, and bread and butter with mother, and gets grub as I jobs besides. I makes no bargain. If a cove's scaly, we gets to know him. I hopes to have a barrer of my own some day, and p'raps a hass. Can I manage a hass? *In* coorse, and he don't want no groomin'. I'd go to Hepsom then; I've never been yet, but I've been to Grinnage fairs. I don't know how I can get a barrer and a hass, but I may have luck."

OF AN ORPHAN BOY, A STREET-SELLER.

FROM one of this class I had the following account. It may be observed that the lad's statement contains little of incident, or of novelty, but this is characteristic of many of his class. With many of them, it may indeed be said, "one day certieth another." It is often the same tale of labour and of poverty, day after day, so that the mere uniformity makes a youth half oblivious of the past; the months, or perhaps years, seem all alike.

This boy seemed healthy, wore a suit of corduroy, evidently not made for him, and but little patched, although old; he was in good spirits.

"I believe I'm between fifteen and sixteen," he said, "and mother died more than two year ago, nearer three, perhaps. Father had gone dead a long time afore; I don't remember him." [I am inclined to think that this story of the death of the father is often told by the mother of an illegitimate child to her offspring, through a natural repugnance to reveal her shame to her child. I do not know, however, that it was the case in this instance.] "I don't remember about mother's funeral, for I was ill myself at the time. She worked with her needle; sometimes for a dress-maker, on "skirts," and sometimes for a tailor, on flannels. She sometimes worked all night, but we was very badly off—we was so. She had only me. When mother died there was nothing left for me, but there was a good woman—she was a laundress and kept a mangle—and she said, 'well, here's a old basket and a few odd things; give the kid the basket and turn the bits of old traps into money, and let him start on muffins, and then he must shift for hisself.' So she tuk me to a shop and I was started in the muffin line. I didn't do so bad, but it's on'y a winter trade, isn't muffins. I sold creases next—no, not creases, cherries; yes, it was creases, and then cherries, for I remembers as 'ow 'Ungerford was the first market I ever was at; it was so. Since then, I've sold apples, and oranges, and nuts, and chestnuts

—but *they* was dear the last time as I had 'em—and spring garters a penny a pair, and glass pens; yes, and other things. I goes to market, mostly to Common Gard'n, and there's a man goes there what buys bushels and bushels, and he'll let me have any little lot reas'nable; he will so. There's another will, but he ain't so good to a poor kid. Well, I doesn't know as 'ow one trade's better nor another; I think I've done as much in one as in another. But I've done better lately; I've sold more oranges, and I had a few sticks of rhubarb. I think times is mending, but others says that's on'y my luck. I sleeps with a boy as is younger nor I am, and pays 9d. a week. Tom's father and mother—he's a coal-heaver, but he's sometimes out of work—sleeps in the same room, but we has a good bed to ourselves. Tom's father knew my mother. There's on'y us four. Tom's father says sometimes if his rheumatics continues, he and all on 'em must go into the house. Most likely I should then go to a lodging-house. I don't know that some on 'em's bad places. I've heer'd they was jolly. I has no amusements. Last year I helped a man one day, and he did so well on fruit, he did so, for he got such a early start, and so cheap, that he gave me 3d. hextra to go to the play with. I didn't go. I'd rather go to bed at seven every night than anywhere else. I'm fond of sleep. I never wakes all night. I dreams now and then, but I never remembers a dream. I can't read or write; I wish I could, if it would help me on. I'm making 3s. 6d. a week now, I think. Some weeks in winter I didn't make 2s."

This boy, although an orphan at a tender age, was yet assisted to the commencement of a business by a friend. I met with another lad who was left under somewhat similar circumstances. The persons in the house where his mother had died were about to take him to the parish officers, and there seemed to be no other course to be pursued to save the child, then nearly twelve, from starvation. The lad knew this and ran away. It was summer time, about three years ago, and the little runaway slept in the open air whenever he could find a quiet place. Want drove him to beg, and several days he subsisted on one penny which he begged. One day he did not find any one to give him even a halfpenny, and towards the evening of the second he became bold, or even desperate, from hunger. As if by a sudden impulse he went up to an old gentleman, walking slowly in Hyde-park, and said to him, "Sir, I've lived three weeks by begging, and I'm hungering now; give me sixpence, or I'll go and steal." The gentleman stopped and looked at the boy, in whose tones there must have been truthfulness, and in whose face was no doubt starvation, for without uttering a word he gave the young applicant a shilling. The boy began a street-seller's life on lucifer-matches. I had to see him for another purpose a little while ago, and in the course of some conversation he told me of his start in the streets. I have no doubt he told the truth, and I should have given a more detailed account of him, but when I inquired for him, I found that he had

gone to Epsom races to sell cards, and had not returned, having probably left London on a country tour. But for the old gentleman's bounty he would have stolen something, he declared, had it been only for the shelter of a prison.

OF THE LIFE OF AN ORPHAN GIRL, A STREET-SELLER.

"FATHER was a whitesmith," she said, "and mother used to go out a-washing and a-cleaning, and me and my sister (but she is dead now) did nothing; we was sent to a day school, both of us. We lived very comfortable; we had two rooms and our own furniture; we didn't want for nothing when father was alive; he was very fond on us both, and was a kind man to everybody. He was took bad first when I was very young—it was consumption he had, and he was ill many years, about five years, I think it was, afore he died. When he was gone mother kept us both; she had plenty of work; she couldn't a-bear the thought of our going into the streets for a living, and we was both too young to get a place anywhere, so we stayed at home and went to school just as when father was alive. My sister died about two year and a half ago; she had the scarlet-fever dreadful, she lay ill seven weeks. We was both very fond of her, me and mother. I often wish she had been spared, I should not be alone in the world as I am now. We might have gone on together, but it is dreadful to be quite alone, and I often think now how well we could have done if she was alive.

"Mother has been dead just a year this month; she took cold at the washing and it went to her chest; she was only bad a fortnight; she suffered great pain, and, poor thing, she used to fret dreadful, as she lay ill, about me, for she knew she was going to leave me. She used to plan how I was to do when she was gone. She made me promise to try to get a place and keep from the streets if I could, for she seemed to dread them so much. When she was gone I was left in the world without a friend. I am quite alone, I have no relation at all, not a soul belonging to me. For three months I went about looking for a place, as long as my money lasted, for mother told me to sell our furniture to keep me and get me clothes. I could have got a place, but nobody would have me without a character, and I knew nobody to give me one. I tried very hard to get one, indeed I did; for I thought of all mother had said to me about going into the streets. At last, when my money was just gone, I met a young woman in the street, and I asked her to tell me where I could get a lodging. She told me to come with her, she would show me a respectable lodging-house for women and girls. I went, and I have been there ever since. The women in the house advised me to take to flower-selling, as I could get nothing else to do. One of the young women took me to market with her, and showed me how to bargain with the salesman for my flowers. At first, when I went out to sell, I felt so ashamed I could not ask anybody to buy of me; and many times went back at night with all my stock, with-

out selling one bunch. The woman at the lodging-house is very good to me; and when I have a bad day she will let my lodging go until I can pay her. She always gives me my dinner, and a good dinner it is, of a Sunday; and she will often give me a breakfast, when she knows I have no money to buy any. She is very kind, indeed, for she knows I am alone. I feel very thankful to her, I am sure, for all her goodness to me. During the summer months I take 1s. 6d. per day, which is 6d. profit. But I can only sell my flowers five days in the week—Mondays there is no flowers in the market: and of the 6d. a day I pay 3d. for lodging. I get a halfpenny-worth of tea; a halfpenny-worth of sugar; one pound of bread, 1½d.; butter, ½d. I never tastes meat but on Sunday. What I shall do in the winter I don't know. In the cold weather last year, when I could get no flowers, I was forced to live on my clothes, I have none left now but what I have on. What I shall do I don't know—I can't bear to think on it."

OF TWO RUNAWAY STREET-BOYS.

I ENDEAVOURED to find a boy or girl who belonged to the *well-educated* classes, had run away, and was now a street-seller. I heard of boys of this class—one man thought he knew five, and was sure of four—who now lived by street-selling, my informant believed without having any recourse to theft, but all these boys were absent; they had not returned from Epsom, or had not returned to their usual haunts, or else they had started for their summer's excursion into the country. Many a street-seller becomes as weary of town after the winter as a member of parliament who sits out a very long session; and the moment the weather is warm, and "seems settled," they are off into the country. In this change of scene there is the feeling of independence, of freedom; *they* are not "tied to their work;" and this feeling has perhaps even greater charms for the child than the adult.

The number of lads of a *well-educated class*, who support themselves by street-selling, is not large. I speak of those whom I have classed as children under fifteen years of age. If a boy run away, scared and terrified by the violence of a parent, or maddened by continuous and sometimes excessive severity, the parent often feels compunction, and I heard of persons being sent to every lodging-house in London, and told to search every dry arch, to bring back a runaway. On these occasions the street-sellers willingly give their aid; I have even heard of women, whose degradation was of the lowest, exerting themselves in the recovery of a runaway child, and that often unsolicited and as often unrecompensed.

The children who are truants through their own vicious or reckless propensities, or through the inducements of their seniors, become far more frequently, thieves or lurkers, rather than street-sellers. As to runaway girls of a *well-educated class*, and under fifteen, I heard of none who were street-sellers.

I now give instances of two runaway lads, who have been dishonest, and honest.

The one, when he told me his history, was a slim and rather tall young man of 23 or 24, with a look, speech, and air, anything but vulgar. He was the son of a wealthy jeweller, in a town in the West of England, and ran away from home with an adult member of his father's establishment, who first suggested such a course, taking with them money and valuables. They came to London, and the elder thief, retaining all the stolen property, at once abandoned the child, then only ten, and little and young-looking for his age. He fell into the hands of some members of the swell-mob, and became extremely serviceable to them. He was dressed like a gentleman's son, and was innocent-looking and handsome. His appearance, when I saw him, showed that this must have been the case as regards his looks. He lived with some of the swell-mobsmen—then a more prosperous people than they are now—in a good house in the Southwark-Bridge-road. The women who resided with the mobsmen were especially kind to him. He was well fed, well lodged, well clad, and petted in everything. He was called "the kid," a common slang name for a child, but he was *the* kid. He "went to work" in Regent-street, or wherever there were most ladies, and his appearance disarmed suspicion. He was, moreover, highly successful in church and chapel practice. At length he became "spotted." The police got to know him, and he was apprehended, tried, and convicted. He was, however—he believed through the interest of his friends, of whose inquiries concerning him he had heard, but of that I know nothing—sent to the Philanthropic Asylum, then in St. George's-road. Here he remained the usual time, then left the place well clothed, and with a sum of money, and endeavoured to obtain some permanent employment. In this endeavour he failed. Whether he exerted himself strenuously or not I cannot say, but he told me that the very circumstance of his having been "in the Philanthropic" was fatal to his success. His "character" and "recommendations" necessarily showed where he had come from, and the young man, as he then was, became a beggar. His chief practice was in "screwing," or writing on the pavement. Perhaps some of my readers may remember having noticed a wretched-looking youth who hung over the words "I AM STARVING," chalked on the footway on the Surrey side of Waterloo Bridge. He lay huddled in a heap, and appeared half dead with cold and want, his shirtless neck and shoulders being visible through the rents in his thin jean jacket; shoe or stocking he did not wear. This was the rich jeweller's son. Until he himself told me of it—and he seemed to do so with some sense of shame—I could not have believed that the well-spoken and well-looking youth before me was the piteous object I had observed by the bridge. What he is doing now I am unable to state.

Another boy, who thought he was not yet fifteen, though he looked older, gave me the following account. He was short but seemed strong,

and his career, so far, is chiefly remarkable for his perseverance, exercised as much, perhaps, from insensibility as from any other quality. He was sufficiently stupid. If he had parents living, he said, he didn't know nothing about them; he had lived and slept with an old woman who said she was his grandmother, and he'd been told that she weren't no relation; he didn't trouble himself about it. She sold lucifer-boxes or any trifle in the streets, and had an allowance of 2s. weekly, but from what quarter he did not know. About four years ago he was run over by a cab, and was carried to the workhouse or the hospital; he believed it was Clerkenwell Workhouse, but he weren't sure. When he recovered and was discharged he found the old woman was dead, and a neighbour went with him to the parish officers, by whom—as well as I could understand him—he was sent to the workhouse, after some inquiry. He was soon removed to Nor'ud. On my asking if he meant Norwood, he replied, "no, Nor'ud," and there he was with a number of other children with a Mr. Horbyn. He did not know how long he was there, and he didn't know as he had anything much to complain of, but he ran away. He ran away because he thought he would; and he believed he could get work at paper-staining. He made his way to Smithfield, near where there was a great paper-stainer's, but he could not get any work, and he was threatened to be sent back, as they knew from his dress that he had run away. He slept in Smithfield courts and alleys, fitting himself into any covered corner he could find. The poor women about were kind to him, and gave him pieces of bread; some knew that he had run away from a workhouse and was all the kinder. "The fust browns as ivver I yarned," he said, "was from a drover. He was a going into the country to meet some beasts, and had to carry some passels for somebody down there. They wasn't 'evvy, but they was orkerd to grip. His old 'oman luk out for a young cove to 'elp her old man, and saw me fust, so she calls me, and I gets the job. I gived the greatest of satisfaction, and had sixpence giv me, for Jim (the drover) was well paid, as they was vallyble passels, and he said he'd taken the greatest of care on 'em, and had engaged a poor lad to 'elp him." On his return the child slept in a bed, in a house near Gray's-inn-lane, for the first time since he had run away, he believed about a fortnight. He persevered in looking out for odd jobs, without ever stealing, though he met some boys who told him he was a fool not to prig. "I used to carry his tea from his old 'oman," he went on, "to a old cove as had a stunnin' pitch of fruit in the City-road. But my best friend was Stumpy; he had a beautiful crossin' (as a sweeper) then, but he's dead now and berried as well. I used to talk to him and whistle—I *can* just whistle" [here he whistled loud and shrill, to convince me of his perfection in that street accomplishment] "—and to dance him the double-shuffle" [he favoured me with a specimen of that dance], "and he said I hinterested him. Well, he meant he liked it, I s'pose. When he went to rest hissself, for he soon got tired, over

his drop of beer to his grub, I had his crossin' and his broom for nuff'n. One boy used to say to Stumpy, 'I'll give you 1*d.* for your crossin' while you's grubbin.' But I had it for nuff'n, and had all I yarned; sometimes 1*d.*, sometimes 2*d.*, but only once 3½*d.* I've been 'elping Old Bill with his summer cabbages and flowers (cauliflowers), and now he's on live heels. I can sing 'em out prime, but you 'eared me. I has my bit o' grub with him, and a few browns, and Old Bill and Young Bill, too, says I shall have better to do, but I can't until peas. I sleeps in a loft with 'ampers, which is Old Bill's; a stunnin' good bed. I've cried for and 'elped other costers. Stumpy sent me to 'em. I think he'd been one hisself, but I was always on the look-out. I'll go for some

bunse soon. I don't know what I shall do time to come, I niver thinks on it. I could read mid-*lin'*, and can a little now, but I'm out of practice."

I have given this little fellow's statement somewhat fully, for I believe he is a type of the most numerous class of runaway urchins who ripen, so to speak, into costermongers, after "helping" that large body of street-traders.

I heard of one boy who had been discharged from Brixton, and had received 6*d.* to begin the world with, as it was his first offence, on his way back to London, being called upon suddenly as soon as he had reached the New Cut (then the greatest of all the street-markets) to help a costermonger. This gave the boy a start, and he had since lived honestly.

LONDON LABOUR

AND THE

LONDON POOR;

A

CYCLOPÆDIA OF THE CONDITION AND EARNINGS

OF

THOSE THAT *WILL* WORK,
THOSE THAT *CANNOT* WORK, AND
THOSE THAT *WILL NOT* WORK.

BY

HENRY MAYHEW.

THE LONDON STREET-FOLK;

COMPRISING,

STREET SELLERS.
STREET BUYERS.
STREET FINDERS.

STREET PERFORMERS.
STREET ARTIZANS.
STREET LABOURERS.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:
GRIFFIN, BOHN, AND COMPANY,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

1861.



THE LUCIFER MATCH GIRL.

From a Daguerreotype by BEARD