

SOME STRANGE AVOCATIONS.

Strangers are the shifts to which humanity is sometimes put to earn the whorowithal to supply its daily needs; and many are the ways of getting a living not to be found catalogued in any known list of trades. Few are the ills to which flesh is heir for which a remedy or palliative may not be obtained, if one only knows where to seek it. For instance, what a medical witness lucidly described as a "contusion of the integuments under the orbit, with extravasation of blood and ecchymosis of the surrounding allular tissue" may now be so dextrously manipulated as to defy observation by having recourse to a professor of the art of doctoring black eyes—an avocation recognized by Mr. Dickens in his dictionary of London, wherein anyone unfortunately afflicted with an accidental black eye, but obliged at the same time to go into society, is advised to betake himself to a certain "artist in black eyes" equal to concealing the most aggravated specimen at a cost of half-a-crown, or double that fee if the patient must be attended at home. Said a witness under cross-examination: "I am an Early-caller. I call different tradesmen at early hours, from one till half-past five in the morning, and that is how I get my living. I gets up between twelve and one; I goes to bed at six, and sleeps till the afternoon. I calls bakers between one and two—the bakers are the earliest of all." What sort of a living he made is not recorded. A pound a week, we should say, would be the outside figure, and to earn that he would need a couple of score of customers. The early-caller's fee is well earned, since, but for his intervention his clients would often lose a day's pay, if not be thrown out of work altogether, by failing to keep time. Not so deserving of encouragement are the "tup-pennies," carrying on their vocation in those quarters of London where pawnbrokers and poor people abound. They are feminine intermediaries between the pawnbroker and folks anxious to raise a loan upon their belongings, who, rather than transact such business for themselves, are willing to pay two-pence for every parcel conveyed to everybody's "uncle" or redeemed from his clutches. These go-betweeners, it is averred, also receive a quarterly commission from the tradesmen they favour with their patronage: and so one way and another contrive to make a comfortable living out of their neighbour's necessities.

Convinced that duplicated presents were burdensome and unprofitable possession to newly-married folks, a cute New Yorker hit upon the happy notion of reliving them of such superfluities; and success begetting imitation, there are now some half-dozen traders in the Empire City dealing in wedding-gifts; one limiting his dealings to china; another to silver and plated ware; while all is fish that comes to a net of the third, who keeps a large store ostensibly devoted to the sale of unredeemed pledges. Said this worthy to an enquiring gentleman: "When a young couple belonging to good families get married, nine times out of ten they find themselves in possession of certain kinds of household stuff enough to last several generations. One bride, for instance, received eight pairs of opera-glasses; of course she did not want them all, and I bought five of them. When a marriage between two rich folks comes off a list of the presents generally finds its way into the newspapers. I don't go to them as soon as they are married; they'd kick you out of the house if you went on such business for the first few weeks. You have to let them settle down to housekeeping, and find out for themselves how much useless stuff they have got; and even then, the wife generally objects to sell; but after seeing them a few

times, they fall in with the idea, and are willing to sell what they don't want and then a bargain is soon struck. Young married people seldom know the value of the presents they receive, and besides they cost them nothing, so its all profit to them." And probably not far from all profit to the shrewd purchaser, who takes their superfluities off their hands on his own terms. There are men in Paris, birds of a feather with chiffonier, who go from hospital to hospital collecting the linsed plasters that have served the turn of doctor and patient; afterwards pressing the oil from the linsed, and disposing of the linen, after bleaching it, to the paper-maker. Others make a couple of francs a day by collecting old corks, which, being cleaned and pared, fetch, it is said, half a franc per hundred. If this be so, it would be worth somebody's while to go cork collecting in London and other large cities. A lady resident of the Faubourg St. Germain is credited with earning a good income by hatching red, black and brown ants for pheasant preservers. One Parisian gets his living by breeding maggots out of the foul meats he buys of the chiffoniers, and fattening them up in tin boxes. Another breeds maggots for the special behoof of nightingales; and a third "marchand d'asticots" boasts of selling between thirty and forty millions of worms every season for piscatorial purposes. He owns a great pit at Montmatre, wherein he keeps his store. Every day his scouts bring him fresh stock, for which he pays them from eight pence to ten pence per pound, according to quality; reselling them to anglers at just double those rates, and clearing thereby something over three hundred pounds a year. No wonder he professes great fondness for his "children," as he calls them; although, like other fond fathers, he is ready enough to part with them when opportunity offers. This curious avocation is not unknown in England. Some twelve years ago, we are told, Mr. Mills, a fishing-tackle maker of Nottingham, in order to insure a constant supply of bait for his customers, started a farm for the rearing of lobworms, cockspurs, ring tailed brandlings, and other worms in demand among the disciples of Walton, who abound in the old lace town. To keep his farm stocked, men and boys go out at night collecting worms in the meadows and pastures; a moist warm night yielding from two to six thousand worms. As soon as they are brought in, they are placed in properly selected moss, field-moss for choice, to scour until they become little more than skin, freshly caught worms being too tender for the anglers to handle; while 'when a worm is properly educated, he is as tough as a bit of india rubber, and behaves as a worm should do when put upon the hook' when this condition is attained, the worms are packed in moss, and put up in light canvas bags for the market. This worm-merchant does not entirely depend upon the industry of his collectors, but breeds large quantities himself in his own garden: the component parts of his breeding-heap being a secret he not unnaturally keeps to himself. Ludlow street, a very unsavoury quarter in New York, is inhabited chiefly, if not wholly, by Poles; living in the smallest of tenements, and given to sharing their limited space with cats, dogs, ducks and geese. They are the cat-meat—not the cat's-meat-purveyors of the city hunting the streets at night to capture stray cats for conversion into sausages. Three among them especially devote themselves to getting, feeding and breeding cats for the table. Such cats as are captured by their 'boys' are carefully sorted; those in good condition being slaughtered at once, while the others are relegated to large boxes, to be fed regularly with a

fattening compound. Sometimes the animals are confined in a yard, the walls of which are smeared with something so obnoxious to puss that she will not cross it—a something for which town gardeners here would give much to know the recipe. Our authority, who visited a Ludlow street cat yard not long ago, says: "It presented a most amusing spectacle. About a hundred cats of all sizes, colours, and ages were sleeping, eating, quarrelling and caterwauling all grades being represented, from the handsome Angora and Maltese, to the homely backyard Tom."

When considered fit for eating, the cats are disposed of to small butcher's who make a specialty of cat-sausage, and festoon their shop windows with them; the delectable delicacies having a ready sale, which is ever increasing; those who indulge in them declaring cat meat superior to any rabbit. An advertisement in a New York journal offering colored ladies instruction in French, music and deportment, sent an inquisitive reporter in search of the advertiser, who proved to be a comely full-blooded negress, talking with the fluency of her kind, but with hardly a trace of negro dialect; thanks to having lived many years in the service of a Creole family in New Orleans, and mixing but little with her own race. Mrs. Johnson owned her, peculiar business was not so flourishing as it might be, but it was a growing one, and she did not doubt it it would prove a paying one in good time; since there was no lack of coloured ladies emulous of the graces and accomplishments of their white sisters, and willing to pay two dollars for an hour's lesson in either branch. Her pupils, she said, 'took hold' of the piano readily enough, but did not care about learning French, being much more anxious to speak English or 'United States,' as she preferred calling it, like white folks. There was not much difficulty in teaching them how to walk, bow, and so on; but it took a deal of patient drilling to cure them of ignoring the g in words ending in ing, and of saying 'whar,' 'dar' 'thar', instead of 'where' and 'there'; while it was especially difficult to teach them the niceties of emphasis and inflection. Nevertheless, she had 'taken the kinks, if not out of the hair, out of the tongue' of many a woman as black as herself, and achieved notable success with a pure negress from Alabama who was so ashamed of her skin and so convinced that no white person ever respected a black one, that she always wore a heavy veil when walking in the streets. Mrs. Johnson's model pupil, however, was 'a light molatto, as pretty a girl as you would meet in an hours walk on Broadway, young, slender, and just as stylish as she can be' whom her proud preceptress was ready to match against the daughter of any white millionaire for good manners.

Bone collecting is not an avocation peculiar to the States, but, there are nevertheless bone collectors of various kinds. John Chinsman, content enough to live and die far away from the land of his birth, has a decided objection to his bones remaining in alien earth. We understand that the Chinese guilds in California employ men to go over the country, even to Oregon, and across the Sierra Nevada, to collect the bones of their compatriots, which after being scraped, are carefully rolled in paper, labelled and despatched to San Francisco, where they remain until enough are accumulated to load a vessel, when they are sent to Hong-Kong for final interment. Ships carrying such a cargo can carry nothing else; for when a vessel had a cargo partly of bones and partly of flour, grain and the like, the catables were found unmarketable in China, because of a belief that gaseous emanations permeated them, or from sheer superstition. The same rule apparently obtains

wherever Chinamen go; for in a Melbourne newspaper we read: "During the month, a party of Chinese accompanied by a European have been busily engaged visiting cemeteries in the country districts, exhuming the bones of deceased Chinamen for the purpose of transmission to China. The bones, after exhumation, are carefully counted, to ascertain that none are absent, and are then tied up in parcels, labelled, and inclosed in boxes with a quantity of written papers and a pack of Chinese playing-cards. Incense and perfumed papers are kept burning during the ceremony. The number of skeletons which have been taken up is very great."

How the collectors of Chinese bones are remunerated, is more than we know if they are paid by results, it is to be hoped they are more honest in their dealings than certain contractors who, undertaking to exhume and reinter the bodies of the Federal soldiers who fell before Petersburg and Richmond, at the rate of eight dollars a body, separated each corpse into four parts, placed each part in a coffin, and received four times their proper reward from the American Government!

My Faithful Dog.

When a boy I lived in a small village known then as Big Lick, Va., now the beautiful city of "Roanoke." My brother and I were very fond of dogs, and our parents being of an indulgent nature always allowed us about as many as we cared for, which was usual from four to five. There was a gentleman who lived near us and traveled in the summer season with "Robinson's Circus" of whom I was always a great favorite. With this circus was a very large Newfoundland dog which from his immense size was a side show curiosity. The dog became very fond of my friend and in leaving the "circus" at the close of the season, he had no trouble in bringing him with him. At that time, however, the truth of how he became the possessor of the animal was not known to my father or he would no doubt have objected when he was offered to me as a present. Coming into possession of this wonderful animal, which was much greater in my estimation from the fact of having traveled with a big show as a curiosity "Keno," (for that was his name) and I soon became the best of friends and constant companions.

Near my father's place was a small creek, and ordinarily could be waded with perfect ease, but at times during heavy rains become very much swollen. At one of these times, I in crossing on a log, lost my balance and plunged headlong into the water. "Keno" ran up and down the stream trying to give the alarm but from some cause could not get any one to come to my rescue. I drifted down for some distance, and finally when just about drowned, my faithful dog swam to my rescue and, taking hold of my coat sleeve dragged me to the bank. When I was discovered he stood over me licking my face apparently trying to restore me to consciousness.

It is needless to add that, after this, "Keno" was the hero of not only our family but the entire community, and was afterwards known as "Brave Keno." Sometime after this a descendant of his saved the life of a three year old child in about the same manner.

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