

The origin of our early cries might be ascribed to the parent of invention. An industrious man finding perhaps his trade running slack, might have ventured abroad with his whole stock, and by making his case known, invited his neighbours to purchase; and this mode of vending commodities being adopted by others, probably established the custom of itinerant hawkers, to the great and truly serious detriment of those housekeepers who contributed to support their country by the payment of their taxes.

Originally the common necessities of life were only sold in the streets, but we find as early as the reign of Elizabeth that cheese-cakes were to be had at the small house near the Serpentine River in Hyde Park. There were also other houses for the sale of cheese-cakes, and those at Hackney and Holloway were particularly famous. The landlord of the latter employed people to cry them about the streets of London; and within the memory of the father of the present writer an old man delivered his cry of 'Holloway Cheese-cakes,' in a tone so whining and slovenly, that most people thought he said 'All my teeth ache.' Indeed among persons who have been long accustomed to cry the articles they have for sale, it is often impossible to guess at what they say.

Many of the old inhabitants of Cavendish Square must recollect the mournful manner in which a weather-beaten Hungerford fisherman cried his 'Large silver Eels, live Eels.' This man's tones were so melancholy to the ears of a lady in Harley Street that she allowed the fellow five shillings a week to discontinue his cry in that neighbourhood; and there is at the present time a slipshod wretch who annoys Portland Place and its vicinity generally twice, and sometimes three times a day, with what may be strictly called the braying of an ass, and all his vociferation is to inform the public that he sells water-cresses, though he appears to call 'Chick-weed.'

Every stationer's or general-shop can now supply all the 'Fine Writing-ink,' wanted either by clerks or authors. There is a grocer's shop, or co-operative store at every turn; and who therefore needs him who cried aloud 'Lilly white Vinegar, three-pence a quart?' When everybody, old and young, wore wigs a wig-seller made his stand in the street, or called from door to door, and talked of a 'Fine Tie, or a fine Bob-wig sir?' Formerly, women cried 'Four pair for a shilling, Holland Socks,' also 'Long Thread Laces, long and strong,' 'Scotch or Russian Cloth,' 'Buy any Wafers or Wax.' 'London's Gazette, here?' The history of cries is a history of social changes. Many of the working trades, as well as the vendors of things that can be bought in every shop, are now nearly banished from our thoroughfares. The cry of 'Water-cresses' used to be heard from some barefoot nymph of the brook, who at sunrise had dipped her foot into the bubbling runnel, to carry the green luxury to the citizens' breakfast-tables. Water-cresses are now cultivated, like cabbages, in market-gardens. The cry of 'Rosemary and Briar' once resounded through the thoroughfares; and every alley smelt

when the whole street was a mart for odoriferous herbs. Cries like these are rare enough now; yet we do hear them occasionally... Then comes a pale-looking woman with little bunches in her hand, who, with a feeble voice, cries 'Buy my sweet Briar, any Rosemary?' John Gay tells us:

'Successive cries the seasons' change declare, And mark the monthly progress of the year. Hark! how the streets with treble voices ring, To sell the bounteous product of the spring.'

We no longer hear the cries which had some association of harmonious sounds with fragrant flowers. The din of 'noiseful gain' exterminated them.

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