A Day with an East-End Photographer.

"HERE y'are now, on'y sixpence for yer likeness, the 'ole thing, 'strue's life. Come inside now, won'tcher? No waitin'. Noo instanteraneous process."

Thus, with the sweet seductiveness of an East-end tout, was a photographer endeavouring to inveigle 'Arry and 'Arriet into his studio, which was situated—well, "down East som'ere," as the inhabitants themselves would describe the locality. It was somewhere near the Docks; somewhere, you may be sure, close bordering upon that broad highway that runs 'twixt Aldgate and the Dock-gates, for within those boundaries the tide of human life flows most strongly, and the photographer hoped, by stationing himself there, to catch a few of the passers-by, thrown in his way like flotsam and jetsam. He was not disappointed in this expectation. While daylight lasted there was generally a customer waiting in his little back parlour, enticed thither by the blandishments of the tout outside.

THE ESTABLISHMENT.

The establishment was not prepossessing to an eye cultivated in the appearance of the artistic façades of photographers in the West. The frontage consisted of a little shop, with diminutive windows, which it was the evident desire of the proprietor to make the most of by engaging in other commercial pursuits.

There seemed to be an incongruity in the art of the photographer being associated with the sale of coals, firewood, potatoes, sweets, and gingerbeer, but the East-enders apparently did not trouble themselves to consider this in the least. There was, indeed, a homely flavour about this miscellaneous assortment of useful and edible articles, which commended itself to their mind. What was more natural than that 'Arry, having indulged in the luxury of a photograph, should pursue his day's dissipation by treating his 'Arriet to a bottle of the exhilarating "pop," to say nothing of a bag of sweets to eat on their holiday journey.

The coals, firewood, and potato department, so far from being regarded as in any way derogatory to the photographer's profession, was rather calculated to impress the natives, who were accustomed to look upon a heap of coals—to say nothing of the firewood and potatoes—as a material sign of prosperity.

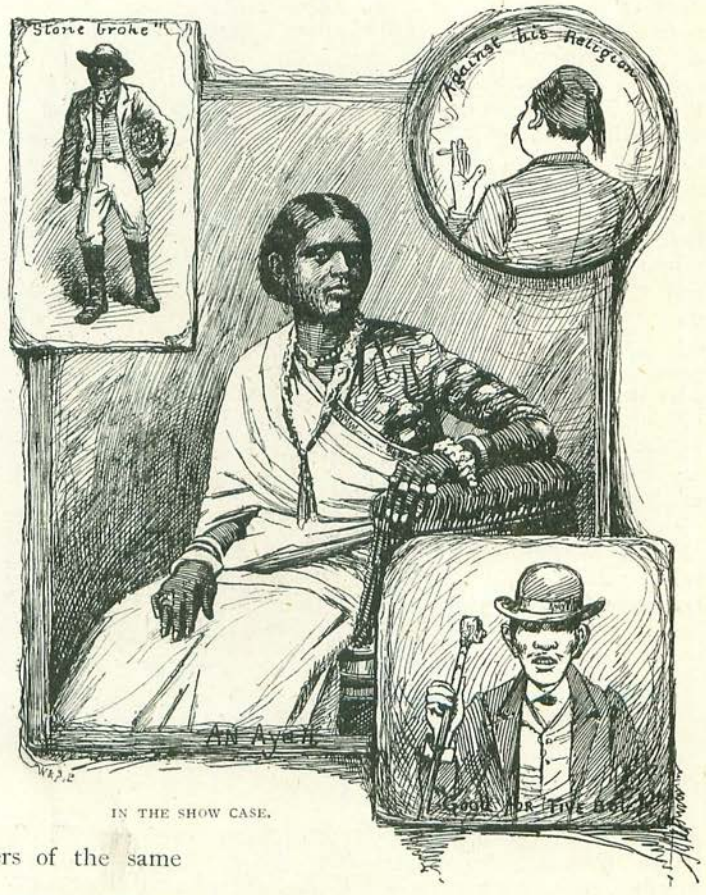
So far as the photographer was concerned it was a matter of necessity as well as choice that he came to be thus associated, for it transpired that he had married the buxom woman, whom we now see behind the counter, at a time when he was trying hard to make ends meet in the winter season, when photography is at a discount. She, on the

other hand, had a thriving little business of the general nature we have indicated, and was mourning the loss of the partner who had inaugurated the shop, and for a time had shared with her his joys and sorrows. The photographer had won her heart by practising his art on Hampstead Heath the last Bank Holiday, and the happy acquaintance thus formed had ripened into one of such mutual affection that the union was consummated, and another department was added to the little general business by the conversion of the yard at the back into a photographic studio.

The placards announcing the price of coals and firewood, and the current market rates of potatoes, were elevated to the topmost panes of the window, and the lower half was filled with a gorgeous array of specimen portraits in all the glory of their tinsel frames.

From that day the shop was a huge attraction, and the proprietor of the wax-work show over the way cast glances of ill-concealed envy and jealousy at the crowd which had deserted his frontage for the later inducements opposite.

The incoming vessels from foreign ports brought many visitors, and generally a few customers. To the foreign element the window was especially fascinating. Many a face of strange mien stared in at the window, and the photographer being somewhat of an adept with an instantaneous camera, would often secure a "snap shot" of some curious countenance, the owner of which could not be enticed within. These would duly appear in the show cases, and served as decoys to others of the same nationality.



IN THE SHOW CASE.

There was the solemn-faced Turk in showy fez, and with dainty cigarette 'twixt his fingers, who surveyed the window with immutable countenance, and was imperious to all the unction of the tout. This latter worthy was not aware that it was against the religion of the "unspeakable Turk" to be photographed, or he would not have wasted his energy on such an unpromising customer.

The negro sailor was apparently struck with the presentments of the other members of his race, but asseverated that he was "stone broke," and did not own a cent to pay for a photograph. He had spent such small earnings as he had received, and was now on his way back to his vessel. "Me no good, me no money," he told the tout, who turned away from him in disgust.

There has so far been a good many passers-by to-day for every likely customer, and the tout is almost in despair. "Rotters," he mutters; "not a blessed tanner among 'em."

Ah! here's his man, though, and he is on the alert for his prey, as he sees a

dapper little figure with unmistakable Japanese features come sauntering down the street. He is dressed in the most approved style of the East-end tailor, who no doubt has assured him that he is a "reg'lar masher." So evidently thinks the little Jap, as he shoots his cuffs forward, flourishes his walking cane, and displays a set of ivory white teeth in his guileless Celestial smile. The tout rubs his hands with a business-like air of satisfaction as he sees the victim safely handed over to the tender mercies of the operator within. "Safe for five bobs' worth, that 'un," he soliloquises, winking at no one in particular, but possibly just to relieve his feelings by the force of habit.

The next customer attracted was an Ayah, or Hindoo nurse, a type often to be seen in the show-case of the East-end photographer. These women find their way to England through engagements as nurses to Anglo-Indian families coming home, and they work their way back by re-engagements to families outward bound. Whenever a P. & O. boat arrives there will most probably be seen one or more of these women, whose stately walk and Oriental attire at once attract attention.

Prominent also among the natives who find their way up from the Docks are the Malay sailors, in their picturesque white dresses. Sometimes the photographer secures a couple for a photo, but as a rule they have little money. "Like all the rest o' them blessed haythens," says the tout, "not a bloomin' meg among a 'ole baker's dozen of 'em."

"NOW, LOOK PLEASANT!"

The faces of such types are not, however, interesting to the East-enders. Their interest in the window display is only heightened when familiar faces make their appearance in the tinsel frames. There was, for instance, positive excitement in the neighbourhood when a highly-coloured portrait of the landlord of a well-known beershop in the same street was added to the collection.

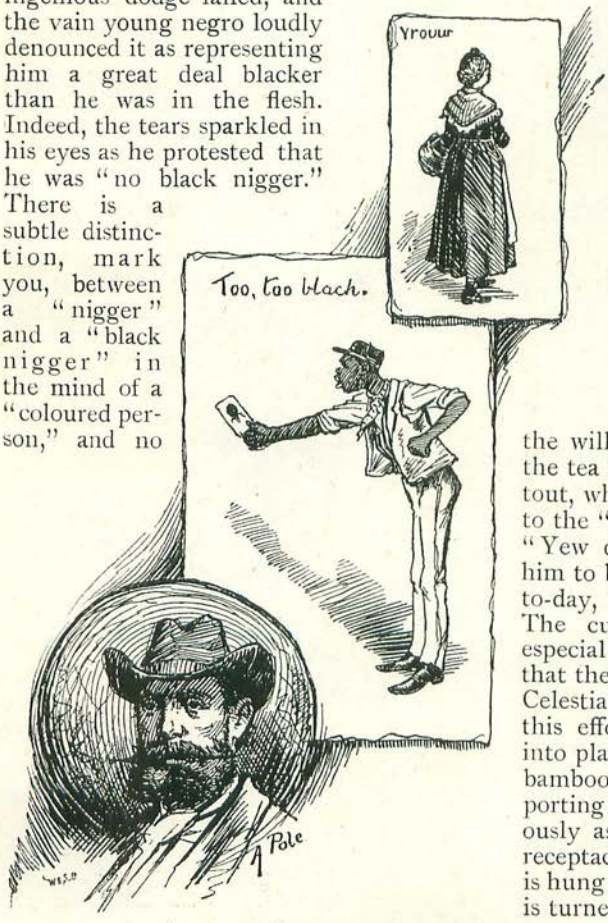
Everyone recognised the faithfulness at once, though it was irreverently hinted that in the colouring the exact shade of the gentleman's nose had not been faithfully copied.

One can imagine the feelings of pride with which the photographer had posed his worthy neighbour, who had arrayed himself in all the glory of his Sunday best suit.

"Head turned a little this way, please! Yes—now — look at this—yes—now, look pleasant!"

Everything would have gone well at this point, but the dog, which it was intended should form an important adjunct to the picture, and symbolically typify the sign of the house—"The Jolly Dog"—set up a mournful howl, and made desperate efforts to get away from the range of that uncanny instrument in front of him. However, the photographer waited for a more favourable moment, and while the dog was considering the force of his master's remarks, the exposure was successfully made. The result was regarded as quite a *chef d'œuvre* in the eyes of those who stopped to gaze at it as it hung in a place of honour in the window of the little front shop.

The "reg'lar" East-enders, as distinguished from the foreign element, were, indeed, very easy to please; but, unfortunately, they were not the mainstay of the photographer's business. He must needs look for other customers to eke out a living. And here his difficulties began. He had to be careful not to take a certain low type of Jewish features in profile, for the foreign Jew, once he has been acclimatised, does not like to look "sheeny"; and the descendants of Ham—euphemistically classed under the generic term of "gentlemen of colour"—were always fearful lest their features should come out too dark. One young negro who came to be photographed expressly stipulated that he should not be made to look black. To obviate this difficulty, the photographer wets his customer's face with water, so as to present a shiny appearance to the lens of the camera, and a brighter result is thus secured. On this particular occasion the ingenious dodge failed, and the vain young negro loudly denounced it as representing him a great deal blacker than he was in the flesh. Indeed, the tears sparkled in his eyes as he protested that he was "no black nigger." There is a subtle distinction, mark you, between a "nigger" and a "black nigger" in the mind of a "coloured person," and no greater insult can be levelled at him than to apply the latter epithet.



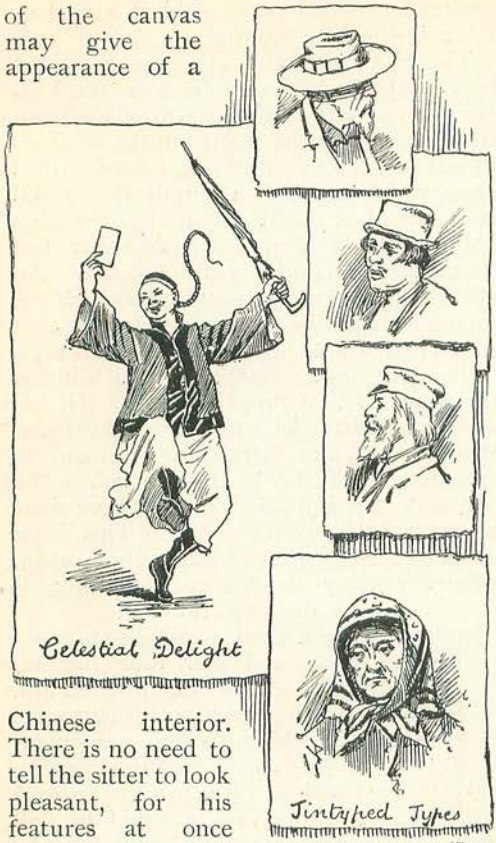
The tout's thoughts are soon distracted by the appearance of a German fraulein, evidently of very recent arrival in England, who is admiring the photos in the window. She is arrayed in a highly-coloured striped dress, which is not of a length that would be accepted at the West-end, for it reaches only to the ankles, and shows her feet encased in a clumsy pair of boots. An abnormally large green umbrella which she carries is another characteristic feature that seems inseparable from women of this type.

The tout has a special method of alluring the women folk within the studio. He has a piece of mirror let into one of the tinsel frames which he carries in his hand as specimens. He holds this up before the woman's face, and asks her to observe what a picture she would make. This little artifice seldom fails to attract the women, whatever their nationality, for vanity is vanity all the world over.

John Chinaman is quite as easily satisfied, and the tout has no difficulty in drawing him within, but the drawback to his custom is that he seldom has any money, or, if he has any, is not inclined to part with it. It is just a "toss-up," as the tout says, whether he will pay, if he gets the Celestial inside, though it is worth the risk when business is not very brisk.

Here is one fine specimen of a Celestial coming along. Western civilisation, as yet, has made no impression upon him, and he looks for all the world the Chinaman of the willow-pattern plate in the window of the tea shop. John falls an easy prey to the tout, who ushers him inside, and whispers to the "Guv'nor" in a mysterious aside: "Yew du 'im for nothin', if ye can't get him to brass up. Lots o' Chaneymen about to-day, an' 'e'll advertise the business." The customer is thereupon posed with especial favour, the photographer feeling that the reputation of the business in the Celestial mind depends on the success of this effort. Chinese accessories are called into play; John Chinaman is seated in a bamboo chair, against a bamboo table, supporting a flower vase which looks suspiciously as though it had once served as a receptacle for preserved ginger. Overhead is hung a paper lantern, and the background is turned round so that the stretcher frame

of the canvas may give the appearance of a

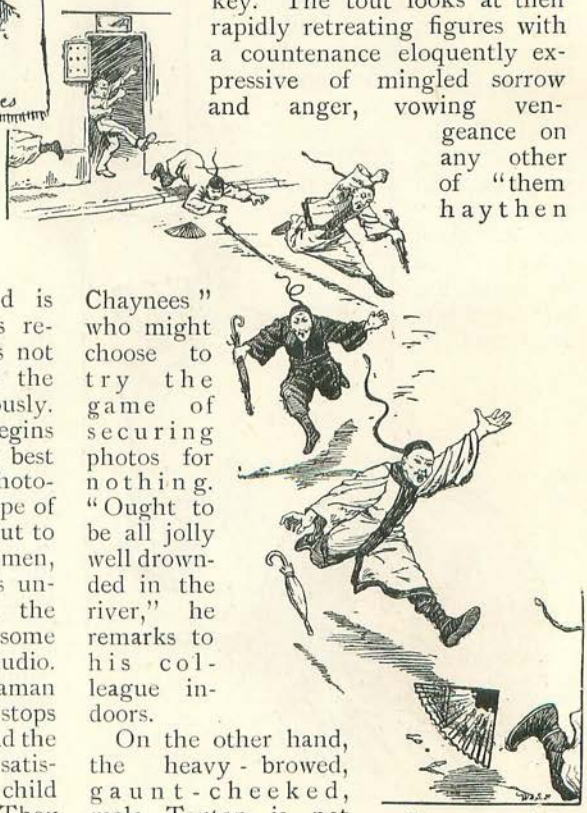


Chinese interior. There is no need to tell the sitter to look pleasant, for his features at once expand into that peculiar smile which Bret Harte has described as "child-like and bland."

The photo is duly completed and handed over to the customer for his inspection and approval. He manifests quite a childish delight, and is about to depart with it, when he is reminded by word and sign that he has not paid. John very well understands the meaning of it all, but smiles vacuously. When, however, the photographer begins to look threatening, he whines in his best English that he has no money. The photographer slaps him all round in the hope of hearing a jingle of concealed coins, but to no purpose. "Another blessed specimen, gratis!" he mutters, as he allows his unprofitable customer to depart with the photo, in the hope that it will attract some of his fellow-countrymen to the studio. This seems quite likely, for the Chinaman goes off in a transport of delight. He stops now and again to survey the photo, and the appearance of it evidently gives such satisfaction that he goes dancing off like a child to show it to his Celestial brethren. They straightway resolve also to go and have a photograph for nothing.

A group of chattering Chinamen soon appear in front of the photographer's shop, with the late customer in the midst explaining how the trick is done. It seems to be finally resolved that they should go in one at a time, the others waiting outside. One young member of the party accordingly steps forward, and the tout, delighted to find the bait has so soon taken, never considers the possibility that this customer likewise has no money.

The same scene is enacted as in the previous case, but when it comes to the point of paying for the photo, and John Chinaman is found to be absolutely penniless, there is an unrehearsed ending to the little comedy. The proprietor of the photographic establishment seizes the Chinaman by the collar and drags him into the front shop, where the tout, in instant comprehension of the state of affairs, takes the offender in hand and very neatly kicks him over the doorstep, whence he falls into the midst of his compatriots, who all take to their heels, screaming in a high-pitched key. The tout looks at their rapidly retreating figures with a countenance eloquently expressive of mingled sorrow and anger, vowing vengeance on any other of "them haythen Chaynees" who might choose to try the game of securing photos for nothing. "Ought to be all jolly well drownded in the river," he remarks to his colleague indoors.



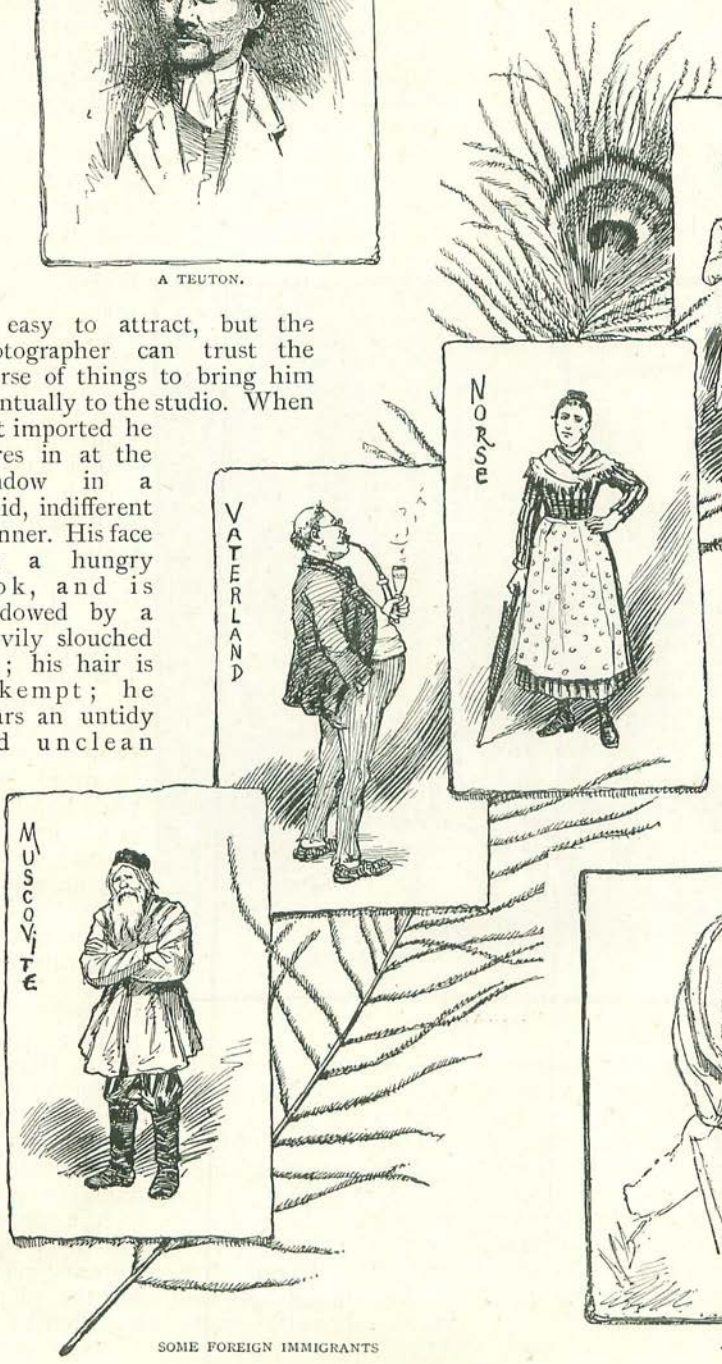
"KICKED OUT."

On the other hand, the heavy-browed, gaunt-cheeked, male Teuton is not

A TEUTON.

so easy to attract, but the photographer can trust the course of things to bring him eventually to the studio. When first imported he stares in at the window in a stolid, indifferent manner. His face has a hungry look, and is shadowed by a heavily slouched hat; his hair is unkempt; he wears an untidy and unclean scarf; his boots are big and heavy, and his trousers several inches too short for him.

In a short time, however, he will blossom forth into a billycock hat, with broad and curly brim of the most approved East-end cut; patent leather boots to match, and a very loud red tie. The hungry look has by this time given way to a sleek, well-fed nature, and he will stroll along with a Teuton sweet-heart, likewise transformed very much from her former self. The short, gaudily-striped dress has given way to the latest "'krect thing" in East-



SOME FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS

AN ORIENTAL.

end fashion, and the green stuff umbrella has gone the way of the striped skirt, to be replaced by the latest novelty in "husband beaters." Then it is that the Teutonic 'Arry and 'Arriet patronise the photographer, and rejoice his heart with, perhaps, a five-shilling order.

The show-case of the East-end photographer gives one a very fair idea of the evolution of the foreign immigrant.

The tout seemed to know the history of every person whose photograph was displayed in the show-case, and he was rattling it off to us at a rate which precluded any possibility of storing it up in our memory, when a slight diversion was created by a coster's barrow, drawn by a smart little pony, being driven up to the front of the photographer's. The driver was Mr. Higgins, we learnt, and the other occupants of the barrow were Mrs. Higgins and the infant son and heir to the Higgins' estate, which was reputed to be something considerable in the costermongers' way, as was evidenced by the fact that Mr. Higgins was enabled to keep a pony to draw his barrow. Mrs. Higgins had determined that 'Enery—*ætat* one year and eight months—should have his photograph taken and afterwards be glorified in a coloured enlargement. Mr. Higgins had assented to this being done regardless of expense. It was a weighty responsibility for the photographer, who always considered the taking of babies was not his strong point. But he reflected upon the increased fame which would accrue to his business if he was successful, and he determined to do it or perish in the attempt.

"YOUNG HIGGINS."

He made hasty preparations by selecting the most tempting stick of toffy he could find in the sweetstuff window, and the tout was instructed to procure from a neighbouring toy shop a doll, a rattle, a penny trumpet, and other articles dear to the juvenile mind.

The youthful Higgins was duly placed in a chair, behind which Mrs. Higgins was ensconced with a view to assisting the photographer by preserving a proper equilibrium in the sitter, and also ensuring confidence in the infantile mind.

So far, the child had been quietly sucking his thumb and surveying the studio with an interested air, but no sooner was his attention directed to the photographer than a distrustful frown settled upon his face, and his irritation at the photographer's presence found expression in a yell of infantile wrath. The more the photographer tried to conciliate by flourishing the toys the more the child yelled. The photographer danced and sung, and blew the penny trumpet, and was about to give up the operation in despair, when it dawned on him that he had forgotten the toffy stick. It was produced, and had its effect. On being assured by Mrs. Higgins, behind the chair, that the "ducksy darling would have its toffy stick," the youthful sitter held that prospective joy with his tear-glistening eye, and the photographer seizing a favourable moment performed the operation with a sigh of satisfaction. Baby Higgins had its toffy stick, Mrs. Higgins had a pleasing photo of her infant offspring, and the photographer proudly congratulated himself on

having so successfully performed his task. The production of such elaborate efforts as the coloured enlargements was, however, attended with disadvantages and disappointments at times. It was hard to give entire satisfaction to such exacting critics in these matters as the East-end folk, and there was always the risk that the picture might be thrown upon his hands if not liked.

Taking it all round, his time was much more profitably employed out of doors on high days and holidays, in taking sixpenny "tintypes" "while you wait."

We have seen him on a Bank Holiday beaming with good luck. He has started out early in the morning with the intention of proceeding to Hampstead, but instead of going direct thither, he pitches his camera near the walls of the Docks, and manages to catch a good many passers-by before they have had the opportunity of spending their money in the pleasures of a London Bank Holiday. Here he has succeeded in inducing 'Arry and 'Arriet to have their photos taken.

Such is a chapter in the life of an East-end photographer. To-day he may be doing a "roaring" business, but to-morrow he may be reduced to accepting the twopences and threepences of children who club together and wait upon him with a demand that he will take "Me, an' Mary Ann, an' little Mickey all for thruppence." He invariably assents, knowing that, though there can be little profit, the photo will create a feeling of envy in the minds of other children who will decide on having a "real tip topper" at sixpence.

The stock-in-trade of an East-end photographer is not a very elaborate one. He may pick up the whole apparatus second-hand for about £5, and the studio and fittings are not expensive. The thin metal plates cost not more than 10s. per gross, and the tinsel binding frames about 3s. per gross, while the chemicals amount to an infinitesimal sum on each plate. On a good day a turnover of £2 to £3 may be made, but there are many ups and downs, and trials of temper and patience, to say nothing of the unhealthy nature of the business, all going to make up many disadvantages associated with the life of an East-end photographer.