The "card-counters", or, as I have heard them sometimes called by street-sellers, the "small coins", are now of a very limited sale. The slang name for these articles is "Jacks" and "Half-Jacks". They are sold to the street people at only two places in London; one in Holborn, and the other at Black Tom's (himself formerly a street-seller, now a "small swag") in Clerkenwell. They are all made in Birmingham, and are of the size and colour of the genuine sovereigns and half-sovereigns, but it is hardly possible that anyone who had ever received a sovereign in payment could be deceived by the substitution of a Jack. Those now sold on the streets are much thinner, and very much lighter. Each presents a profile of the Queen, but instead of the superscription "Victoria Dei Gratia" of the true sovereign, the Jack has "Victoria Regina". On the reverse, in place of the "Britanniarum Regina Fid. Def." surrounding the royal arms and crown, is a device (intended for an imitation of St. George and the Dragon) representing a soldier on horseback—the horse having three legs elevated from the ground, while a drawn sword fills the right hand of the equestrian, and a crown adorns his head. The superscription is "To Hanover", and the rider seems to be sociably accompanied by a dragon. Round the Queen's head of the Half-Jack is "Victoria, Queen of Great Britain", and on the reverse the Prince of Wales's Feathers, with the legend "The Prince of Wales's Model Half Sovereign".

Until within these five or six years the gilt card-counters had generally the portraiture of the monarch, and on the reverse the legend "Keep your temper", and a seasonable admonition to whist players. Occasionally the card-counter was a gilt coin, closely resembling a sovereign; but the magistracy, eight or nine years back, "put down" the sale of these imitations.

Under another head will be found an account of the use made of these sovereigns in pretended wagers. A further use of them was to add to the heaps of apparent gold at the back of the table-keeper in a tall booth, when gambling was allowed at Epsom and the "great meetings".

There are now only two men regularly selling Jacks in the streets.

1 For more information about the "To Hanover" counters see Mr. John Allan's article in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1943, pp. 108-10. (Ed.)
There have been as many as twelve. One of these street-sellers is often found in Holborn, announcing "30s. for 1d.! 30s. for 1d.! cheapest bargain ever offered; 30s. for 1d.".

The Jacks cost, wholesale, 4s. 6d. the gross; the half Jacks 2s. 9d. The two are sold for 1d. If the sale be not brisk, the street-seller will give a ring into the bargain. These rings cost a shilling the gross, or the third part of a farthing each.

If there be on the year’s average only two street-sellers disposing of the Jacks, and earning 9s. weekly—to earn which the receipts will be about 20s.—we find £104 expended in the streets on these trifles.

Of medals the street sale is sometimes considerable, at others a mere nothing. When a popular subject is before the public, many of the general patterers "go to medals". I could not learn that any of the present street people vended medals in the time of the war; I believe there are none at present among the street folk who did so. I am told that the street sale of medals was smaller than might reasonably have been expected. The manufacture of those articles in the Salamanca, Vittoria, and even Waterloo days was greatly inferior to what it is at present, and the street price demanded was as often 6d. as a smaller sum. These medals in a little time presented a dull leaden look, and the knowledge that they were "poor things" seems to have prevented the public from buying them to any extent in the streets, and perhaps deterred the street-sellers from offering them. Those who were the most successful of the medal sellers had been, or assumed to have been, soldiers or seamen.

Within the last eighteen years or more there has hardly been any public occurrence without a comparatively well-executed medal being sold in the streets in commemoration of it. That sold at the opening of London Bridge was, I am told, considered a "superior thing", and the improvement in this art or manufacture has progressed to the present time. Within the last three years the most saleable medals, an experienced man has told me, were of the Hungerford Suspension (bridge), the New Houses of Parliament, The Chinese Junk, and Sir Robert Peel. The Thames Tunnel medals were at one time "very tidy", as were those of the New Royal Exchange. The great sale is at present of the Crystal Palace; and one man had heard that there were a great many persons coming to London to sell them at the opening of the Great Exhibition. "The great eggs and bacon, I call it", he said, "for I hope it will bring us that sort of grub. But I don’t know; I’m afraid there will be too many of us. Besides they say we shan’t be let sell in the Park."

The exhibition medal is as follows:—

What the street-sellers call the "right side"—I speak of the "penny" medal, which commands by far the greatest sale—presents the Crystal Palace, raised from the surface of the medal, and whitened by the application of aqua fortis. The superscription is "THE BUILDING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, LONDON, 1851". On the "wrong side"
"Of the Street-Sellers of Card Counters, Medals, &c." 73

(of so-called) is the following inscription, occupying the whole face of the medal:

THE CONSTRUCTION IS OF
IRON AND GLASS
1848 FEET LONG
ABOUT HALF IS 456 FEET WIDE.
THE REMAINDER 408 FEET WIDE
AND 66 FEET HIGH;
SITE, UPWARDS OF 20 ACRES.
COST £150,000.
JOSH. PAXTON, ARCHT.

The size of this medal is between that of a shilling and a half-crown. A patterer, who used to sell medals on Sunday mornings in the Park, informed me that he told his customers the Crystal Palace part was "dead silver", by a new discovery making silver cheap; but for all that he would risk changing it for a fourpenny bit!

The twopenny medal is after the same style, but the letters are more distinct. On my stating to a medal-seller that it was difficult to read the inscription on his "pennies", he said "Not at all, sir; but it's your eyes is dazzled". This was said quietly, and with a touch of slyness, and I have no doubt was the man's "cut and dried" answer.

The patterer whom I have mentioned told me that, encouraged by a tolerable sale and "a gathering of the aristocrats" on a very fine Sunday in January or February—he could not remember which—he ventured upon six "sixpenny medals", costing him rs. 9d. He sold them all but one, which he showed me. It was exactly the size of a crown piece. The Crystal Palace was "raised" and of "dead silver", as in the smaller medals. The superscription was the same as on the penny medal; but underneath the representation of the palace were raised figures of Mercury and of a naked personage with a quill as large as himself, a cornucopia, and a beehive: this I presume was Industry. These twin figures are supporters to a medallion, crown-surmounted, of the Queen and Prince Albert: being also in "dead silver". On the reverse was an inscription giving the dimensions, &c., of the building.

The medals in demand for street sale in London seem to be those commemorative of local events only. None, for instance, were sold relating to the opening of the Britannia Bridge.

The wholesale price of the medals retailed in the street at 1d. is 7s. the gross; those retailed at 2d. are 12s. the gross, but more than three-fourths of those sold are penny medals. They are all bought at the swag shops, and are all made in Birmingham. It is difficult to compute how many persons are engaged in this street trade, for many resort to it only on occasions. There are, however, from 12 to 20 generally selling medals, and at the present time about 30 are so occupied; they, however, do not sell medals exclusively, but along
with a few articles of jewellery, or occasionally of such street stationery as letter stamps and "fancy" pens, with coloured glass or china handles. A fourth of the number are women. The weather greatly influences the street medal trade, as rain or damp dims their brightness. One seller told me that the day before I saw him he had sold only four medals. "I've known the trade, off and on", he said, "for about six years, and the greatest number as ever I sold was half-a-gross one Saturday. I cleared rather better than 3s. I sold them in Whitehall and by Westminster Bridge. There was nothing new among them, but I had a good stock, and it was a fine day, and I was lucky in meeting parties, and had a run for sets." By a "run for sets", my informant meant that he had met with customers who bought a medal of each of the kinds he displayed; this is called a "set".

An intelligent man, familiar with the trade, and who was in the habit of clubbing his stockmoney with two others that they might buy a gross at a time, calculated that 15 medal sellers were engaged in the traffic the year through, and earned, in medals, above 6d. a day each, to clear which they would take 6s. 6d. weekly, giving a yearly outlay of £25. 10s. It must be remembered, to account for the smallness of the earnings, that the trade in medals is irregular and the calculation embraces all the seasons of the trade.

On occasions when medals are the sole or chief articles of traffic, they are displayed on a tray, which is a box with a lid, and thus look bright as silver on the faded brown velvet with which the box is often lined. Among the favourite pitches are Oxford Street, the approaches to London, Blackfriars, Westminster, and Waterloo bridges; the railway stations, and the City Road.

Of small coins (proper) there was no sale in the streets. When there was an issue of half-farthings about seven years ago the street-sellers drove a brisk trade in vending them at four a penny, urging the sale before the coins got into circulation, which they never did. "It's not often", said one patterer to me, "that we has anything to thank the Government for, but we may thank them for the half-farthings. I dare say at least 30 of us made a tidy living on them for a week or more; and if they wasn't coined just to give us a spirit, I should like to know what they was coined for! I once myself, sir, for a lark, gave one to a man that swept a capital crossing, and he was in a thundering passion, and wanted to fight me when I told him they were coined to pay the likes of him!"

There was afterwards a tolerable sale of the "new silver pennies, just issued from the mint, three ha'pence each, or 7 for 6d."; also of "genuine models of the new English florin, only 1d." Both of these were fictitious.

HENRY MAYHEW.