



# London Labour and the London Poor (Oxford World's Classics)

*Henry Mayhew*

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'I go about the street with water-creases crying, "Four bunches a penny, water-creases."'

London Labour and the London Poor is an extraordinary work of investigative journalism, a work of literature, and a groundbreaking work of sociology. Mayhew conducted hundreds of interviews with London's street traders, entertainers, thieves and beggars which revealed that the 'two nations' of rich and poor in Victorian Britain were much closer than many people thought. By turns alarming, touching, and funny, the pages of London Labour and the London Poor exposed a previously hidden world to view. The first-hand accounts of costermongers and street-sellers, of sewer-scavenger and chimney-sweep, are intimate and detailed and provide an unprecedented insight into their day-to-day struggle for survival. Combined with Mayhew's obsessive data gathering, these stories have an immediacy that

owes much to his sympathetic understanding and highly effective literary style.

This new selection offers a cross-section of the original volumes and their evocative illustrations, and includes an illuminating introduction to Henry Mayhew and the genesis and influence of his work.

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