was something which we now only see at fancy-dress balls. Merchant, knight, courtier, prior, monk, pedlar, apothecary, ballad-singer, beggar, water-carrier—each having his own manner and either drab or gaudy apparel.

Londoners lived more in the streets then—much business was transacted in the street, communal feasts and carnivals were made. The King held occasional court in the street. Adults and children played games and exercised at sports in the street, and in the street men aired their grievances as they do today in Hyde Park !

In celebration of victories oxen were roasted whole in the street, bonfires were lit and barrels of wine emptied into the conduits. The noblemen as well as the plebian fought out their quarrels in the street. News of invasion or battle, of rebellion or treason was carried in the street by messengers on steaming horses. Those without lodging slept and were allowed to die in the street. The general condition of the street was chaos and dirt.

Craftsmen worked in open sheds—women did their needlework at the door and cried their gossip across the street, and the streets held far more noise than this generation has ever known.

Cheapside—the earliest mention is West Cheap in 1067, distinguishing from East Cheap, and was first called Cheapside in 1510, so called from the markets held there, where all would meet to barter or purchase. Starting from the west end of Cheapside near Foster Lane was the place where the bread from Stratford was sold to the poor. The rivalry with the city bakers was resented at times and so a tariff weekly charge of 2d. was made for the passage of the carts through Aldgate. It was more difficult to supervise a cartload of bread than the loaves sold in the stalls at West Cheap, and so in 1392 a rule was made that when any loaf from Stratford was found deficient in weight, the whole cartload should be confiscated. Raids were frequently made upon these men by the officials and on one such occasion, when the Mayor himself came to make inspection, one of them hastily inserted a piece of iron into a loaf to increase its weight—but was detected and seized.

The Gates open an avenue of antiquarian law, for in the early days, almost the whole of London was comprised in that section which we call the City; the section enclosed by the wall with gates at the Tower, Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, Aldersgate, Newgate and Ludgate, and with outlets to the river by the water-gates and stairs.

London Bridge which was the only bridge to the river was also gated. All those were bolted and barred at sunset so that travellers arriving after that hour had to use the inns outside the gates.

Just as each calling had its costume, so each craft or trade of this enclosed city was lodged in its respective street, and we have to notice that the special localities of trades and industries suggest that mercers, clothiers, jewellers and so on, were often clustered together. Surely a convenience to the general buyer and a gain to the tradesmen ? Two or three instances are still noticeable—the many rag women's shops in Brick Lane, and the jewellers and silversmiths in Clerkenwell, whilst we have the diamond, pearl and precious stone dealers in Hatton Gardens. Goldsmiths in Old Change ; pepperers, spice merchants and grocers in Soper's Lane—now known as Queen Street, Cheapside. Fishmongers in Old Fish Street and Thames Street. Ironmongers in Old Jewry and Ironmongery Lane. Butchers in East Cheap and St. Nicholas Shambles or Newgate Market. Butchers were also in Cross Market where now stands the Mansion House. Hosiers in Hosiery Lane—now Bow Lane. It will be seen that much of this centralisation no longer exists. Many of the smaller thoroughfares are mementoes of the signs of old houses, shops and especially taverns which once stood there.

M. B. M.

(To be concluded.)

A Flower Festival.

WE RECENTLY SPENT TWO HOURS amongst the most entrancing array of flowers and shrubs this island of ours can produce.

Covent Garden, for the first time in its history, had put on a Flower Show in this our Festival Year.

We are all acquainted with the good-natured bustle of early morning trade in this vicinity, but we were not prepared for such a transformation when Covent Garden donned her party frock and welcomed her visitors.

Choicest blooms were arranged by master hands, and banks of flowers of every colour and perfume met us at most unexpected corners. Arches of flowers appeared over every gangway, each archway being arrayed in a different hue, and towering over all was a replica of the Skylon, standing 50 ft. high, and being composed of golden chrysanthemums of uniform size.

When we realise that upwards of 400 stands were arranged for this great display, we know that our pen could never do justice to a description of this event.

We bought our Programme from one of London's Pearly Queens whose plumed hat vied with the colours of the blooms in her floral background.

Mr. Leslie Johns, who provided us with the history of the foundation and growth of Covent Garden, has given us permission to quote a few details for the interest of our readers.

" Literally on the doorstep of St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden market grew up. In 1671 market rights were granted by Charles II to the Duke of Bedford in spite of the fact that the Corporation of the City of London had official rights of market within a seven-mile radius.

" At this time although Covent Garden was one of the first districts in London where houses were built of brick there were no market buildings as we know them now. Rough sheds and portable stalls held the fruit and vegetables brought from the surrounding rural districts of Marylebone, Hackney and Chelsea. The open space was gravelled with a column in the centre bearing a sun-dial. By 1679 there were 23 official market salesmen who paid (cheerfully, we hope) their rates of 2s. per year.

" The original plans presented by Inigo Jones to the Duke called for the market to be surrounded by covered walks which were at that time known as the Piazzas. Actually, these were constructed only on the north side and on the east. The ' Little Piazzas ' on the east side were burnt down in 1769. The Piazzas were the dumping ground of unwanted babies which were collected nightly by the parish beadles and cared for by the parish. These infants almost invariably grew up handicapped by the name Piazza.

" The present market buildings were erected in 1830 by John, sixth Duke of Bedford, with William Fowler as his architect. He provided a long central alley for fruit shops with low alleys on either side north and south for vegetables. External alleys formed walks with the roofs supported by a row of low Tuscan granite columns.

" In 1860, the Floral Hall was built on the north east corner of the square adjoining the Opera House. Intended for the exclusive sale of flowers it was opened with a Grand Ball. But flowers were never sold there. Now the Foreign Fruit Market it is nevertheless frequently taken by uncritical and unobservant historians for the Flower Market which was built on the south east corner of the market square in 1874.

" Work in Covent Garden continued as usual through both World Wars. In each war the district was affected by bombing which was nevertheless not allowed to alter normal trading."

Thank you, British flower-growers, for the happiness your task brings us, and thank you Mr. Johns for your generous response to our quest for knowledge.

M. A.

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