

as places of sojourn whence the desired excursions can be made. The most central spot is Porlock, celebrated by Southey, during his detention at the village inn:—

“Porlock, thy verdant vale, so fair to sight,  
Thy lofty hills, which fern and furze embrown,  
Thy waters, that roll musically down  
Thy woody glens—the traveller with delight  
Recalls to memory.”



JOSEPH GLASS,

THE CLIMBING-BOYS' ADVOCATE.



It is commonly supposed that the race of little chimney-climbers has happily disappeared from the face of the country. It takes something like a long memory to recollect those “innocent blacknesses,” as Charles Lamb called them. Swart servants of a dark age, they used to toddle about after their masters with soot-bag and shovel: nothing white or natural about them from head to foot but their shining eyes and glittering teeth. When the flue of *Materfamilias* smoked, or the parish engines had been in requisition for a fire in her chimney, a proprietor of these poor little slaves was sent for. He came like a ratcatcher with his ferret—had a look at the “chimbley,” as if it were a rabbit hole—spread his dirty sacks and clouts to catch the soot—and then he popped the wretched climbing-boy in. There was a scuffle and a struggling as the small thing worked its painful way up in the filthy reek; presently you heard a clattering of shovel and broom, and the soot came down in black avalanches; then the master of this grimy ferret used to go out to see that the lad went right up and put his hapless head or hand and brush out at the very top. When he did not roll

down neck and crop, the little wretch emerged choked and covered with the soot, all except the irrepressible child-eyes and hungry child-teeth. Sometimes he stuck fast and could not be got at, and sometimes he came down the wrong shaft over a fire and was asphyxiated; his miserable knees always used to get scratched and torn, and sooner or later he was pretty sure to have “sweep’s lungs,” or “sweep’s cancer.” It was a cruel and wicked practice, and most shocking is the reflection that it existed so long. But at last the law did sweep the little sweeps away; the “machine” was invented, which does the business perfectly; and this breed of tiny Africans won their emancipation.

But a horrible story, told this summer in the Maidstone Assize Court, revealed the fact that climbing-boys are still employed in some parts of the country. The report of that case elicited from a morning newspaper an indignant article, from which our opening paragraph is extracted. It is to be hoped that such cruelties now rarely occur; and that they are now exceptional is due to many benevolent persons, and especially to one, whose labours in this good cause deserve perpetual record.

In the year 1823, among the workmen then employed in building Finsbury Circus, London, was one whose industrious habits, quiet manners, and neat personal appearance, singled him out from amongst his fellows. He never kept Saint Monday. When the day’s work was done he went home, donned his working clothes for cleaner attire, and spent the evening with his wife. His home and his wife were a picture of comfort. There was only one room: the furniture was simple but all new and neat, and there was a handsome Kidderminster carpet, a luxury just beginning to be introduced into the houses of the poorer classes of the community. His domestic happiness is best described in his own words. “An arrangement was entered into between my wife and myself that each should do the best we could to please each other. By this means everything passed on most delightfully. On going home to my meals I found everything in the nicest order. At breakfast-time the fire was bright, the toast was made and ready cut, and by the time I could sit down the coffee was poured out. At dinner-time I had not to wait a minute, all was ready; and at night, when my work was done, I leisurely enjoyed my tea. This done, we entered upon a retrospect of the past and expressed our anticipations of the future. Our position was to both of us the commencement of happy days: year after year passed away and there was no abatement in our domestic felicity.”

Joseph Glass, whom we thus present to the reader, spent the early part of his life at Manningtree, in Essex, and from his boyhood was remarkable for his intelligence and retiring habits. Another characteristic was that of self-control, evidenced by two circumstances which occurred before he was twenty years of age. At a village feast he had been induced to drink to excess, and was carried home helpless. Feeling the disgrace acutely, he formed a determination never to drink again. This was long before Temperance or Total Abstinence Societies were heard of. He kept his resolve throughout his life, and remained an earnest “teetotaler” to his dying day. At another time he gave way to violent passion. Upon after reflection he felt mortified and humbled by its unreasonableness and sinfulness, and made a vow never to give way to passion again. He wrote his vow upon a piece of paper, and kept it in his waistcoat-pocket. Whenever he found his passion

rising, he felt for the paper, and thus learned to rule his own spirit in spite of his naturally hasty temperament.

He was celebrated among his village neighbours for his rhymes. Some of his papers on "Contentment," "Retirement," and "The True Gentleman," after the lapse of nearly half a century, are still decorating the walls of the cottages in the neighbourhood in which he lived.

The father of Joseph Glass, a stonemason of Colchester, a man of extreme political opinions, who had been nearly pelted to death for refusing to take off his hat to King George III, went to Pennsylvania, leaving his son in the care of his deceased wife's brother, who was a builder in Manningtree. There he learned his uncle's trade, and became early schooled in trouble. The sober, quiet habits of the nephew were not appreciated by his relative, and before his apprenticeship was completed he had to shift for himself. "I hired a large old-fashioned room," he afterwards wrote, "at one shilling per week. On evenings after work I decorated the fire-place with Scripture Dutch tiles, and adorned the walls in water-colours with country scenes, churches, farm-houses, and cottages." Three years he dwelt in his painted chamber, and then he went on his travels, working for some time not far from Beverley, in Yorkshire. He was about thirty years of age when he came to London, and married his wife, Mary Hutchinson, to whom he had been attached before he left his home in Essex.

A year or two of happiness had scarcely elapsed, when he was unexpectedly applied to by the Society for the Suppression of Climbing-Boys, and a new current was given to his life. The cruelty of the practice of employing young children in sweeping chimneys was beginning to be recognised. Jonas Hanway, in the preceding century, had done much to alleviate the sufferings of these friendless children. Not long before the time we are writing of, James Montgomery published a book advocating the claims of climbing-boys to the sympathies of the public. Charles Lamb wrote a genial article about the poor boys in his *Essays of Elia*. The extent of the evil was indeed very great. Hundreds of children perished miserably in their perilous work. Boys, and even girls, at the age of six years and upwards, were *bought* by the chimney-sweepers and trained to ascend the foulest of flues. Imagine a poor child with a black cap drawn over his head and face, ascending, by dint of alternate pressure of knees and back, perpendicular heights of forty, sixty, and sometimes eighty feet, and some idea may be formed of the fearful nature of the employment. The knees became excoriated and ulcerated in all cases before the skin of these little sufferers became inured to their daily work. Sometimes by drawing their knees up too tightly in ascending the flues the children became wedged in, incapable of moving one way or other. Grappling irons had to be used from above, or ropes fastened to the feet below, in order to extricate them from their positions. Who can describe the exquisite torture thus produced? It would be useless to detail the numberless instances of children roasted, smothered, and crushed to death, or lingering in painful disease, as the result of their disgusting employment.

It was strange that the system ever found defenders at all. Southey, writing in "The Doctor," about 1814, gives an account of one of the opponents of emancipation. "The bill which should have put an end to the inhuman practice of employing children to sweep chimneys, was thrown out on the third reading in the House of Lords (having passed the Commons without a

dissentient voice), by a speech from Lord Lauderdale, the force of which consisted in, literally, a Joe Miller jest. He related that an Irishman used to sweep his chimney by letting a rope down which was fastened round the leg of a goose; upon which he replied that a couple of ducks might do as well. The Lords laughed; his lordship had the satisfaction of throwing out the bill, and the home negro trade has continued from that time, now seven years, till this day, and still continues. His lordship had his jest, and it is speaking within compass to say that, in the course of those seven years, two thousand children have been *sacrificed* in consequence."

There was, nevertheless, an insuperable difficulty in the way of passing a bill. No effectual means had been contrived to *supersede* the use of the climbing-boy. Men of eminence in engineering science had been consulted, and had failed to suggest anything that would do the work of the children. The climbing-boy appeared to be indispensable, a kind of necessary evil, to be mitigated, but not prevented, by the humane.

The society for the suppression of the traffic had, however, applied to the right man when they asked the hitherto quiet and contented workman to try his hand. He was fired with the idea. Here was a work in which he might become a public benefactor, and thousands of children look upon him as their friend and saviour from a miserable and soul-killing occupation. But the new undertaking was far from being "respectable." How would his affectionate wife, a "pattern of neatness and good taste," as she was styled, bear the contact with soot and dirt. It was no dilettante interest that had to be taken in the experiment; but stern, hard, ill-remunerated work, to discover by actual practice how chimneys could be swept without the aid of children. His friends unanimously advised him not to enter upon such a precarious enterprise. Self-reliant and hopeful, and following the dictates of his heart, he finally decided to undertake the work; and was soon taxing all his energies and inventive powers to discover a method of sweeping chimneys mechanically. One difficulty after another was surmounted, and in 1827 he produced the *chimney-sweeping machine*, still in universal use throughout the United Kingdom. The bundle of jointed rods, surmounted by the large stiff circular whalebone brush, must be familiar to all who have seen the sooty chimney-sweeper on his daily round.

It was no easy matter to introduce the machine to the public. The chimney-sweepers were violently opposed to the use of it, and strove by every means in their power to prevent its adoption. The trade had become an important one, for statistics showed that nearly one thousand boys were employed in sweeping chimneys in London alone. After seven years' labour, Mr. Glass succeeded in bringing the machine into such general use in the metropolis, that he was able to give a list of more than one hundred public buildings in London swept by the machine, when called upon to give evidence before a committee of the House of Lords in 1834, to whom was referred another bill for the prohibition of the use of climbing-boys. Unfortunately the opposition was not confined to the chimney-sweepers, for representatives of insurance companies, architects, builders, and others, gave evidence against the bill in committee: and the bill was thrown out.

In conjunction with the Society for the Suppression of Climbing-Boys, Mr. Glass held meetings, not only of the public, but also of the chimney-sweepers themselves. The writer well remembers an assemblage of some hundreds of chimney-sweepers, held in a large school-

room in Milton Street, Cripplegate, of the most uproarious character. When Mr. Glass attempted to explain the machine, and recommend its use, on the grounds that it was more effective than the use of boys, and that it would prevent an incalculable amount of human suffering, the yelling and shouting were fearful. It needed a considerable amount of moral courage in Mr. Glass and the gentlemen who accompanied him, to enable them to face the riotous audience.\* In spite of opposition the philanthropists laboured on; and great was the triumph when at last they found that the public recognised their efforts, and an eloquent leader in the "Times" heralded the way to the introduction of a fresh bill into Parliament. Before a select committee of the House of Lords the battle was waged. It is surprising to read in the present day that the managing director of one of the largest insurance companies objected to the discontinuance of the use of boys because they were in the habit of sending up the poor children, after a chimney had been on fire, to see if the fire was out! How would they know that a fire was out unless they sent somebody up the chimney to see! But the evidence of the effectiveness of the machine, and the cruelty of the practice of employing boys, was overwhelming. The bill was recommended by the committee, passed both Houses, and became what is now called the Act of 1840, for the Regulation of Chimneys and Chimney-Sweepers, any one employing boys being liable to a penalty of five pounds for the first offence, and ten pounds for the second.

During the two years before the Act came into operation, Mr. Glass travelled all over England, holding meetings, explaining the provisions of the Act, showing the practicability of the machine, and taking steps for the discontinuance of the use of boys. The labour was enormous. Nearly every large town in England was visited, and many of the country residences of the nobility were examined, and the chimneys altered to enable them to be swept by machinery. So thoroughly was the work done, that when the Act came into force, in 1842, the adoption of the machine was complete in the metropolis, and general throughout the country. Prejudices were, however, still very strong in many places, and occasional journeys had to be made in the interests of the climbing-boys.

Mr. Glass was actively employed in other works of usefulness. Identifying himself with the temperance movement, he was one of its foremost supporters. His house was open and a welcome always ready for the reclaimed men who were afterwards its most eloquent advocates. Amongst those who thus partook of his hospitality was John Cassell, who came up to London from his carpenter's bench to lay, in the adoption and advocacy of temperance principles, the foundation of his remarkable success. Mr. Glass was for some time chairman of the Parent Committee of the British and Foreign Temperance Society. He wrote "The Experiences of a Journeyman Bricklayer," a temperance paper of so much practical good sense and freedom from verbiage, that it became the most popular and widely distributed tract of the day.

\* Mr. Hone, in his "Every-day Book," describes an invention of Mr. George Smart, called a "Scandiscope," for which two gold medals were given by the Society of Arts. It appears to have been one of the earliest machines which excited the opposition of the master chimney-sweepers. The same book contains an account of a meeting in St. John's Wood, on the 1st of May, 1826, where one master sweeper affirmed with great vehemence, and amidst general enthusiasm, that it was "a thing impossible" to do away with climbing-boys. "For instance, look at the Duke of York's fifty-one new chimneys. Let me ask any one of you in company, is it possible a machine could be poked up any one of them?"

He was singularly unsectarian. Originally belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists, without discontinuing his connection with them, he for some years regularly attended his district church, and was as ready to support the Sunday schools and other religious undertakings of the one as the other. Latterly he attended the ministry at Stockwell Chapel, evidencing the same catholicity that had distinguished him in earlier life.

In his later years Mr. Glass gradually retired from all active engagements. His memory going back to the scenes of his boyhood, he employed some of his leisure hours in writing a "History of Manningtree" in rhyme. But his heart was still in his old work. Finding that the boys were clandestinely used for sweeping chimneys in many of the provincial towns, he published a little monthly periodical called "The Climbing-Boys' Advocate," and succeeded in arousing the attention of the humane in Derby, Leicester, and other places.

Mr. Glass never patented his useful invention. He received the silver medal from the Society for the Suppression of Climbing-Boys, and £200 left by a benevolent lady as a prize to the inventor of an effective machine for sweeping chimneys. Modest and unobtrusive, he rarely mentioned his own name in connection with the Climbing-Boy Emancipation. In the "Advocate" he signs himself "The Editor," and with the exception of occasional references to Glass's Machine, the uninformed reader would learn nothing concerning this earnest and self-denying philanthropist.

Full of years, without a care, having accomplished the object of his life's work, Joseph Glass passed away to his rest. The last time he took up his pen he wrote to one of his sons:—"I have lived a lengthened period, and have seen better days than my ancestors. My long life after all seems but short, only I have the consolation of knowing that my last days are my best. Sometimes I think the winter or the summer as it comes round will be my last. But I do not think so despairingly. I have faith in the future, and trust in the only sure foundation." Three weeks after the above was written death came as a welcome messenger. He died on the 29th December, 1867, in his seventy-sixth year.

#### A PARISIAN MUSHROOM CAVE.

It is pretty generally known that mushrooms are grown in great quantity under Paris and its environs, but it is somewhat difficult to obtain access to these *carrières*, and therefore a few words descriptive of one of them may not be unacceptable. The locality is that of Montrouge, just outside Paris. The surface of ground is cropped with wheat; here and there are heaps of white large cut stones ready to be transported to the buildings of Paris, and which have recently been brought to the surface through the coal-pit like openings. There is nothing like a "quarry," as we understand it, to be seen about, but the stone is extracted as we extract coal, and with no interference whatever with the surface of the ground. We find a "champignoniste" after some trouble, and he accompanies us across some fields to the mouth of his subterranean garden, if we may so call it. It is a circular opening, half of it being covered with planks, and the head of a pole with sticks thrust through it appears a couple of feet above the surface, its base resting in the darkness seventy feet below. We descend by this shaky pole with the sticks thrust through it, and soon reach the bottom of the shaft, from which little passages radiate. A few small lamps fixed at the ends of pointed