

Youths' Department.

GNAWING A FILE.—There was once an old house; and in that house lived an old rat. By means of cracks and knot holes, and sundry other holes of his own making, he had an extensive circuit through the whole house. From front to cellar, and from cellar to garret, wherever there was anything that would minister to the comfort of his outer man, he was sure to find it and help himself. One room was used as a sort of granary, the door of which was kept carefully closed. The old rat used to hear the sound of the grain, as it was poured upon the floor or into barrels; and a strong desire possessed him to know, from personal observation, what was in that room. But there was no way for him to gratify that desire, but by making an entrance through an oak board partition. So one night, after all was quiet in the house, he set himself vigorously about the undertaking; and though he found it rather a jaw-aching operation, yet he kept up such an incessant nibbling, that long before daylight his task was accomplished, and his hard toil was rewarded by a plentiful repast at the pile of grain. For some days and nights he passed in and out at his pleasure, and enjoyed the tail-dwelling, without let or hindrance. But the proprietor at length discovered the hole which he had made through the partition, and at once concluded that he would lay an embargo upon that sort of fun; so he thrust a large file into the hole.

The next time the old rat essayed to pass in, he found a slight impediment in his way; and he tried in vain to remove it. At length, said his ratship, "I know what I can do, for I know what I have done. I can gnaw off that stick, for it isn't half as thick as the oak board, but he was determined not to give up. Indeed it was a prominent article in his creed. *Never to back out.* "Ah, a workman is known by his chips," said he, as he looked and discovered quite a little pile, that looked very much like ivory saw dust, though he wondered that his chips should be so light coloured. "I shall fetch it yet," said he; and he applied himself with renewed vigor.

But at length he discovered some blood on the file where he had been gnawing. He instantly clapped his paws to his bleeding mouth, when behold! he made this discovery; that instead of gnawing the file, the file had actually gnawed his teeth quite down to the gums. For a moment he stood confounded. At last he said—"For once I have made a fool of myself." And so he had; for he was not only obliged to go supperless to bed, but what was of vastly more consequence, he had lost what would be quite indispensable in procuring his future suppers. And here we will take leave of his ratship in order to make an application of the story.

Men ought to be wiser than rats; but they are not, for they also frequently *gnaw a file*. A person gnaws a file when, just for the sake of having his own way, he obstinately persists in doing that which is against his own interest—that which injures himself a vast deal more than any body else.

Here is an illustration: A boy carelessly hit his foot against a stone, and as a natural consequence, it ached dreadfully. He instantly made up his mind that he would have his revenge. So he down and went to beating the stone with his fist; and he only desisted when he ceased to feel any pain in his foot, in consequence of the much more severe pain in his bruised knuckles. Now he had his way—he took his revenge, but it was *gnawing a file*.

Here is another: A boy whose name I feel a little delicacy about mentioning, once got a little grouty at something which his mother required him to do; so when he was called to dinner, to show 'ont' his independence, said with pouting lips, "I don't want any dinner." Now he was hungry enough, but he was determined he wouldn't eat, out of spite. He overheard his sister say, "Guess he'll get hungry by supper time," but he thought within himself, you'll see. So he nourished his wrath to keep it warm all the afternoon; and when the sister called him to supper he grouted out more grouty than ever, "I don't want any supper."

But as he turned to go off he heard his mother say, "You'll be a cheap boarder at this rate." So he had the blessed satisfaction of having his own way, and went supperless to bed, where he repented at his leisure. There he lay and thought the matter all over, again and again. He finally came to the "unanimous conclusion in his own mind" that he was a great fool for having done as he had; for he had injured no mortal living so much as himself. It is almost unnecessary to add, that he had a remarkably good appetite for

his breakfast; and that, from that time, he was of the unshaken opinion that it was miserably poor policy to *gnaw a file*.

We might give illustrations equally pertinent, from those of riper years, but we forbear.—*Herald and Journal.*

Selections.

THE GREAT MODERN BABYLON.—[From *Ritchie's Book, "The Night Side of London."*—Think of what London is! At the last census there were 2,862,236 persons of both sexes in it; 1,106,437 males, of whom 146,449 were under 5 years of age. The unmarried males were 670,880; ditto females, 735,871; the married men were 399,098; the wives, 409,791; the widowers were 37,089, the widows 110,376.

On the night of the census there were 28,598 husbands whose wives were not with them, and 39,231 wives mourning their absent lords.

Last year the number of children born in London was 85,838. In the same period 56,786 persons died.

The Registrar-General assumes that with the additional births, and by the fact of soldiers and sailors returning from the seat of war, and of persons engaged in peaceful pursuits settling in the capital, sustenance, clothing, and house accommodation must now be found in London for above 60,000 inhabitants more than it contained at the end of 1855.

Think of that—the population of a large city absorbed in London, and no perceptible inconvenience occasioned by it! Houses are still to let; there are still the usual tickets hung up in the windows in quiet neighborhoods, intimating that apartments furnished for the use of single gentlemen can be had within; the country still supplies the town with meat and bread, and we hear of no starvation in consequence of deficient supply.

London is the healthiest city in the world.

During the last ten years the annual deaths have been on the average 25 to 1,000 of the population; in 1856 the proportion was 22 to 1,000; yet, in spite of this, half of the deaths that happen on an average in London, between the ages of 20 and 40, are from consumption and disease of the respiratory organs.

The Registrar traces this to the state of the streets. He says: There can be no doubt that the dirty dust suspended in the air that the people of London breathe often excites diseases of the respiratory organs. The dirt of the streets is produced and ground, now by innumerable horses, omnibuses and carriages, and then beat up in fine dust, which fills the mouth and inevitably enters the air passages in large quantities. The dust is not removed every day, but, saturated with water in the great thoroughfares, sometimes ferments in damp weather, and at other times ascends again under the heat of the sun as atmospheric dust.

"London," says Henry Mayhew, "may be safely asserted to be the most densely populated city in all the world; containing one fourth more people than Pekin, and two-thirds more than Paris, more than twice as many as Constantinople, four times as many as St. Petersburg, five times as many as Vienna, or New York, or Madrid, nearly seven times as many as Berlin, eight times as many as Amsterdam, nine times as many as Rome, fifteen times as many as Copenhagen, and seventeen times as many as Stockholm."

"London," says Horace Jay, "c'est une province couverte de maisons."

It covers an area of 122 square miles in extent, or 78,029 statute acres, and contains 327,391 houses.

Annually 4,000 new houses are in course of erection for upwards of 40,000 new comers.

The continuous line of buildings stretching from Holloway to Camberwell is said to be twelve miles long.

It is computed that if the buildings were set in a row they would reach across the whole of England and France, from York to the Pyrenees.

London has 10,500 distinct streets, squares, circles, crescents, terraces, villas, rows, buildings, places, lanes, courts, alleys, mews, yards, and rents.

The paved streets of London, according to a return published in 1856, number over 5,000, and exceed 2,000 miles in length; the cost of this paved roading was £14,000,000, and the repairs cost £1,800,000 per annum.

London contains 1,905 miles of gas pipes, with a capital of nearly £4,000,000 spent in the preparation of gas.

The cost of gas lighting is half a million. It has 360,000 lights; and 13,000,000 cubic feet of gas are burned every night.

Last year along these streets the enormous quantity of upward of 80,000,000 of gallons of water rushed for the supply of the inhabitants, being nearly double what it was in 1854.

Mr. Mayhew says: "If the entire people of the capital were to be drawn up in marching order, two and two, the length of the great army of Londoners would be no less than 670 miles, and, supposing them to move at the rate of three miles an hour, it would require more than nine days and nights for the average population to pass by."

To accommodate this crowd, 125,000 vehicles pass through the thoroughfares in the course of 12 hours; 3,000 cabs, 1,000 omnibuses, 10,000 private job carriages and cabs, ply daily in the streets; 3,000 conveyances enter the metropolis daily from the surrounding country. Speaking generally, Tennyson tells us:

"Every minute dies a man,
Every minute one is born."

In London, Mr. Mayhew calculates, 169 people die daily, and a babe is born every five minutes. The number of persons, says the Registrar-General, who died in 1856, in 116 public institutions, such as work-houses and hospitals, was 10,381.

It is really shocking to think, and a deep stigma on the people or on the artificial arrangements of society, by which so much poverty is perpetuated, that nearly one person out of five who died last year, closed his days under a roof provided by law or public charity. It is calculated that 500 people are drowned in the Thames every year. In the first week of the present year there were five deaths from intemperance alone. How much wretchedness lies in these two facts—for the deaths from actual intemperance bear but a small proportion to the deaths induced by the immoderate use of intoxicating liquors; and of the 500 drowned, by far the larger class, we have reason to believe, are of the number of whom Hood wrote:

"Mad with life's history,
Glad of death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world!"

According to the last reports, there were in London 137,000 vagrants admitted in one year into the casual wards of the work-houses.

Here we have always in our midst 107 burglars, 110 house breakers, 38 highway robbers, 773 pickpockets, 3,667 sneaks-men or common thieves, 11 horse-stealers, 141 dog-stealers, 3 forgers, 28 coiners, 317 utterers of base coin, 141 swindlers, 102 cheats, 343 receivers of stolen goods, 2,768 habitual rioters, 1,205 vagrants, 50 begging letter writers, 86 bearers of begging letters, 6,371 prostitutes, besides 470 not otherwise described, making altogether a total of 16,900 criminals known to the police.

These persons are known to make away with £32,000 per annum; the prison population at any particular time is 6,000; costing for the year £170,000. Our juvenile thieves cost us £300 a piece.

Mr. Timbs calculates the number of professions; beggars in London at 35,000, two thirds of whom are Irish. Thirty thousand men, women, and children are employed in the costermonger trade; besides, we have according to Mr. Mayhew, 2,000 street sellers of green stuff, 4,060 street sellers of eatables and drinkables, 1,000 street sellers of stationery, 4,000 street sellers of other articles, whose receipts are three million sterling, and whose incomes may be put down at one million.

Let us extend our survey, and we shall not wonder that the public house, and the gin palace, and the casino, and the theatre, and the penny gaff, and the lowest and vilest places of resort in London are full. In Spitalfields there are 70,000 weavers, with but 10s per week; there are 22,479 tailors; 30,805 shemakers; 43,928 milliners; 21,210 seamstresses; 1,763 bonnet-makers; and 1,277 cap-makers.

What hard, wretched work is theirs!

There are two worlds in London, with a gulf between—the rich and the poor. We have glanced at the latter, for the sake of contrast let us look at the former. Emerson says the wealth of London determines prices all over the globe. In 1847 the money coined in the Mint was £5,158,440 in gold, £125,730 in silver, and £8,960 in copper.

The business of the Bank of England is conducted by about 800 clerks, whose salaries amount to about £190,000. The bank in 1850 had about twenty millions of bank notes in circulation. In the same year there were about five millions deposited in the saving banks of the metropolis.

The gross customs revenue of the port of London in 1849 was £11,070,186; sixty five millions is the esti-