

## Steeplejacks and Their Ways.

(By L. H. Kingston, M.A., in 'Home Words'.)

It is scarcely surprising, taking into account the hazardous character of their craft, that there are not very many steeplejacks in England or in any other country. The physical, as well as intellectual demands made by the vocation are such that there must be few men with digestions sound enough and brains steady enough to perform the work. The eye of a man looking upwards at the fly-like figures, flat against or crawling up the smooth circumference of a chimney so high that the stout lightning conductor cannot be followed to the summit, is enough to make the onlooker reel at the sight; and not even the hearty voices of the brave fellows singing songs as they strike with their hammers, or calling one to another to pay out more rope or hoist up another ladder, give one confidence in their safety.

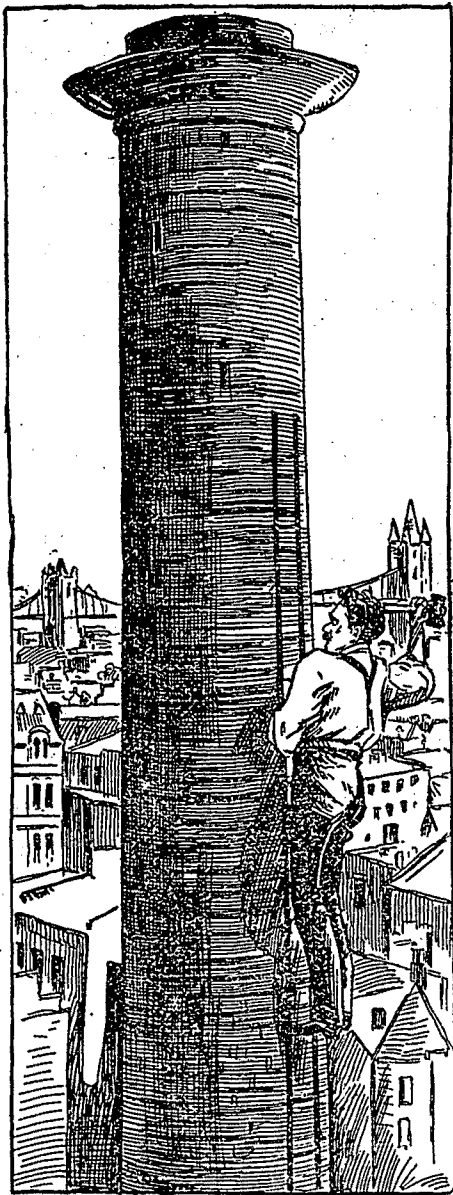
Sailors may display the agility of monkeys aloft, spring in a breath from the slings of a yard to the arm of it, and jockey the spar as though the surging and heaving thing were the back of an ambling colt; shin up to the truck and sing 'Rule Britannia' standing on one leg there; but the mariner has always something to hold on by. If he is unshod he has ropes for his toes to grip, though he should have to let go with both hands. The rope or ladder of the steeplejack is a very different affair from the fabric of a ship's rigging. He ascends to elevations, moreover, whence looking down he would find a man as high up as the royal yard of a big merchant ship small in the distance that lay between. There is something friendly in shrouds and back-stays, in foot-ropes and Flemish horses, in lifts, stirrups and jackstays. The smooth circumference of brick and mortar, however, the sheer up-and-downness of the structure, without a protuberance for the foot to find a lodging on, with hard ground and nothing else to fall upon in lieu of the sailor's chance of bounding off into the sea, with nothing more serious behind, perhaps, than a purple face and streaming clothes, provides a very inhospitable condition of things.

That the number of steeplejacks should be so limited is warrant enough not only of the singular perils of the calling, but the real coolness of mind and regularity of pulse which the exercise of the vocation demands. When a man scales some cathedral height, some towering pinnacle, to fasten a flag upon it in honor of a jubilee, or as a further illustration of the national rejoicings, the astonishment is supreme. Readers of the story can scarcely credit their eyes, and the audacious climber becomes a nine days' wonder. Yet everyday our steeplejacks are performing feats quite as wonderful in their way. As a sample of the courage and presence of mind possessed by these men, an incident which happened at Slaithwaite, some years ago, fairly deserves a place amongst memorable things.

A very extensive cotton mill had been erected for a spinning company, and the chimney, an exceedingly tall one, was so far completed that a steeplejack belonging to Huddersfield was engaged to ascend it, to remove the scaffolding which had been employed by the workmen in the completion of the very summit, or actual mouth of the chimney. The steeplejack easily ascended the perpendicular height, and, after successfully removing the scaffolding, was preparing to descend, when the rope, the one and

only available means by which he would be enabled to reach the ground, became detached and fell to the bottom.

There was the man on the top of the chimney dwarfed into a mere pigmy by the altitude, and hopelessly inaccessible. He was observed to stand in a posture of thought for some little while, as though, indeed, he had fallen into a fit of poetic musing, and was enjoying the spirit of freedom and liberty which came to him out of the prodigious horizon which the great elevation of the chimney enabled him to survey. Possibly had it been in his power to take his stand on



THE STEEPLEJACK AT WORK.

the very top of the structure—where the hole is, in short—the passing traveller might have concluded that the chimney was a pillar erected to the memory of some renowned spinner, and that the little shape on the top of it was the statue of the person commemorated. Be this as it may, our steeplejack, after a brief moment or two of reflection, formed his resolution.

He was seen by the gaping and wondering crowd—at whose perplexity, had their faces been distinguishable, he must have felt more surprised even than they were puzzled and bewildered by his situation—to sit down and pull off one of his stockings. It was then noticed that he fingered this stocking as though he were darning it. The crowd, lost in astonishment, continued to stare and to wonder; but his motive was presently understood when it was seen that, instead of darning his stocking, he was busily engaged in unravelling it. Bit by bit he worked it out into a long thread, letting the end float downwards, as though he were some gigantic spider seeking another chimney with his

sticky filament, in order to build a web. The thread continued to travel downwards until it was within reach.

The object of the cool and dexterous man was immediately grasped. A line sufficiently light for the thread to support it was attached and hauled up by the steeplejack, who, before long, by means of this ingenious device, was provided with a rope strong enough to enable him to slide down to terra firma.

We have read somewhere a similar instance of rescue, and, if we remember rightly, the wife of the man in danger suggested to him the stocking plan. Possibly the steeplejack was acquainted with this instance, but not the less do we admire his cool judgment and presence of mind in so perilous a position.

## The Five C's.

(By Mrs. J. W. Wheeler in New York 'Observer'.)

Hermann Gebhardt had hunted up Philip Cameron for the definite purpose of borrowing enough money to get him through the remainder of the month, but after discovering his retreat, he decided that he had come to the wrong person.

The small side room known as the 'tank room,' and therefore the least desirable in the house, was on the top floor, back, was heated from the hall and furnished almost meagrely, a cot bed, a washstand, a study table, two chairs and a single rug made up the furnishings. Hermann took it all in at a glance.

'So this is where Cameron grinds away and keeps among the first ten of the class! Ugh! that dripping would drive me frantic,' he thought. 'You get up here among the clouds, so we rattle-brained fellows can't bother you, I see,' he said, lightly, taking the chair his friend cleared of books.

'For that and other reasons, mostly the other reasons,' said Philip, good-naturedly, closing his books. 'Yes, my pigeon-hole of a room is nothing compared to your luxurious quarters, but aside from the tank in there, and I don't mind it now, it has the virtue of quietness.'

Hermann's eyes travelled about the little room in search of those small belongings with which students' rooms are usually crowded, but the sum total of his discoveries were a pincushion, a set of shaving papers, a few photographs, and a large illuminated card or banner lettered in gold paint and beautifully embellished with flowers.

'What's that,' he asked, 'some secret society?'

Philip's dark, serious eyes rested upon his guest for a moment, then were lifted to the banner. 'No,' he answered, slowly; 'it's no society device; it's something my mother made me when I left home. I call it my "Five C's."'

'That's just what puzzles me, there's no word to help me out; do tell me about it.'

'It's rather a long story and may not be as interesting to you as to me. I believe I told you that my mother is an invalid; here is her picture taken just as she lies in bed, she hasn't walked since Tom was born, that was almost nine years ago. She paints little things to help pass the time, and having in mind the temptations I would be certain to meet here in the city, she designed this, and gave me it to me, as a parting gift. I well remember that day, calling me to her side, she made me read the letters like a child learning its alphabet, then she explained the meaning of each, I think.

'I can repeat every word she said, and