



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND AGRICULTURE.

VOLUME XVI., No. 24.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, DECEMBER 15, 1881.

SEMI-MONTHLY, 30 CTS. per An., Post-Paid.

A GLOOMY RAMBLE.

Probably it is not often you see a more striking figure than I beheld one summer morning as I looked into a glass in one of the small rooms adjoining the famous London Guildhall.

I had often heard a good deal of the drainage system of London, and I had come for the purpose of seeing a little of it by actually exploring as much as I could manage to get through in a morning's ramble. So I had put myself in the hands of a party of sewersmen in the employ of the city authorities. They took off my boots and encased my legs—trousers and all—in a pair of stout leathern articles that might almost serve for boots and trousers too—stiff, heavy, greasy affairs, made to keep out any amount of water. Then I was coaxed and squeezed and wriggled into a tight blue guernsey, and over all came a coarse blue blouse, fastened round the waist with a leather strap. A pair of thick gloves and an old "sou'-wester" hat, and there I was—a complete sewersman, and, I was bound to confess as I eyed myself in the glass, about as odd-looking an old figure of fun as you would meet with in a day's march.

"Yer own twin-brother wouldn't know 'ee, sir," one of my companions declared, and I was rather glad to hear it, especially when I found that instead of creeping down into the sewers I had come to explore somewhere just outside the premises, as I had expected, our party had to go half a mile or so through the crowded streets of the city. Perhaps I looked as though I had borrowed somebody's clothes, perhaps it was that I couldn't altogether resist a disposition to grin as I went along at finding myself in such toggery out in the public streets by day; but, whatever it was, it is a fact that I made a little sensation as I went along, and people turned to look at me as though I were some stranger from a foreign land.

I was not sorry, therefore, when we came to a door under one of the arches of the Holborn Viaduct, and we made our way into a kind of ante-chamber to the sewers below. Here we are provided with sticks with candles at the end, and down, down, down we go, by a narrow flight of stone steps, at the bottom of which a tiny black stream is creeping along a channel, beside which is a convenient pathway, which we follow until the stream disappears beneath a small archway.

"Will you go under, sir?" enquires our leader, preparing to step into the stream.

"I think not, thank you," is the reply;

"I should like to get back into daylight presently, so I think I won't try that little passage."

My stalwart companions would have dived through it unhesitatingly, and laughed at my refusal. This was the newer part of the city system of drains, and only a few houses were discharging their drainage into it. So after a little further wandering we got back into daylight, and proceeded to one of the square iron gratings that may be seen anywhere in

pouring down their contributions to the surging flood, which sweeps along as if eager to find a way out of the horrid gloom.

How often it happens that we depend for our comfort and well-being upon those of whom we never think and of whose existence we are scarcely aware. Here is a vast underground maze of thoroughfares, in which hundreds of men are every day engaged, just as regularly as others are employed in workshops above, but few ever think of them.

Some thirty men are regularly employed in wandering through these subterranean galleries, keeping the course clear and making necessary repairs.

It would naturally be supposed that the air down in these channels would be intolerably foul and offensive. I do not find it so, however. The smell is peculiar—a sour, pungent odor is the prevailing one in most parts, and it is said that the workmen down in the sewers do not appear to suffer much in health from their existence here.

Here and there we meet with strong and almost overpowering odors. In passing through a sewer beneath a chemical factory or a paraffin oil warehouse, for instance, this is the case, and there are portions of these gloomy galleries in which heavy and deadly gases are apt to accumulate, to the great peril of human life. Several instances have been known in which men have found themselves in the midst of a deadly atmosphere in which they have sunk down and died. A noble rescue was effected, not a great while ago, by a brave fellow whose comrade had been thus overtaken, and who ventured into a sewer, at the risk of his own life, to drag out the insensible form of his companion, which he happily did.

We stand there for a while, a strange-looking group of mortals, more than knee-deep in the stygian flood, and a shudder runs through me as I think of the consequences that might ensue if, while we had been groping our way down in this nether world, a thunderstorm should have gathered overhead and should suddenly have poured down a deluge of water.

"Do you never run any risk in this way?" I asked a sewersman, on another occasion.

"Risk! well, yes; I reckon I've run a good deal in my time," was the reply. "You're busy about your work and don't think much about the weather till, when you least expects it, you finds the stream risin', and the gullies pouring down pretty hard. You must make for up stairs then pretty smart, or it'll soon be all over with

me. I remember once being caught in an awkward place—me and a mate—and before we could get to land the drain filled right up to the crown. Of course our lights were out, and we had to go right through it, head and all."

It is a repulsive way of earning a living, and as I emerge again into the world of sunshine and fresh air, I feel deeply thankful that I am not a regular hand, but only an amateur sewersman.—*Boy's Own Paper.*



IN THE LONDON SEWERS.

the London pavements. The grating was thrown up, and down we went, one after the other, by means of rings fixed in the brickwork. Our candles were relighted, and we set out along some of the older drains—no convenient footways here, but plump into the middle of the stream we have to plunge, thus making the utility of stout waterproof leggings very apparent.

In the sides of the sewer as we go along, the trapped pipes from the houses above are

We pour a pail of water into the "sink," and it never occurs to us to consider that in order that that water may run off satisfactorily through the drains below it is absolutely necessary that somebody shall be down at the bottom of that drain-pipe to keep the channel clear and in good repair. That, at any rate, is the case in London. The "City" of London comprises just about one square mile, and has somewhere about forty-eight miles of streets and fifty miles of drains beneath