

## The History of Child Labour in Sheffield

### Extract From 'The Dream'

Local campaigner, James Montgomery wrote many poems about climbing boys (more commonly known as chimney sweeps).



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The extract below describes a boy's experience of climbing a chimney while the fire was still hot.

Fair pictures in their golden frames,  
And looking-glasses bright;  
Fine things, I cannot tell their names,  
Dazed and bewitch'd me quite.

Master soon thwack'd them out my head –  
The chimney must be swept!  
Yet in the grate the coals were red;  
I stamp'd, and scream'd, and wept.

With his two iron hands he grasp'd  
And hoisted me aloof;  
His naked neck in vain I clasp'd.  
The man was pity-proof.

So forth he swung me through the space,  
Above the smouldering fire;  
I never can forget his face,  
Nor his gruff growl, 'Go higher!'

As if I climb'd a steep house side,  
Or scaled a dark draw-well,  
The horrid opening was so wide,  
I had no hold, - I fell;

Fell on the embers, all my length  
But scarcely felt their heat,  
When, with a madman's rage and strength,  
I started to my feet

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### Questions - The Dream

**Q1.** What did the boy in the poem see in the room before he was sent up the chimney?

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**Q2.** What was it like inside the chimney?

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**Q3.** How has life for children changed since the 1800's, please describe in your own words.