

be called laziness. On one of our fishing excursions a man approached us as we were whipping the stream unsuccessfully, and remarked that he thought the fish would take better a "piece" up the river. We ventured to ask how far the "piece" might be, to which his reply was, "About fifteen miles!" It almost lengthened our holiday to encounter anyone with such a comfortable sense of leisure.

Fishing is the chief industry of Cape Breton, especially in the north, halibut, cod, haddock, mackerel and herring being all found in those waters. Among other things we learned that some fish favour an off-shore wind and others an on-shore wind, and that, as one would expect, they invariably follow the bait. When that is plentiful the toilers on the sea are sure to reap a rich reward. Last season the catch was considerably below the average, the fish having moved to better feeding grounds. The favourite bait is the squid, a gelatinous mass something like the cuttlefish in miniature. These squid are caught, or "jigged"—to use the technical term—by means of a circle of bare hooks, round which they twine their tentacles. It is worth seeing a full herring-net brought to land. The appearance of a shoal in the bay is indicated by a peculiar ruffling of the surface of the water, quickly noticed by the keen eyes of the lookout man from his perch of observation. The herring are usually meshed in a net stretched in a semi-circle near the shore, and drawn in at the right moment when the "run" comes. When division of the spoil has been made among the dozen or more who may be partners in the enterprise, the night after a good catch is usually spent in merriment. The aid of an amateur fiddler is called in, and the men, with their wives and sweethearts, enjoy a rustic dance on the floor of the largest cabin which the settlement happens to boast.

In fishing for cod the boats are anchored in from fifteen to fifty fathoms of water, or even more. A strong line with three hooks at the end of it, and a large piece of lead as a sinker, is dropped from the boat to within a few feet of the bed of the sea. Sometimes it is slow and dreary work, but if the fish are there at all one has not to contend with any dainty fastidiousness on their part. When the squid are not obtainable they will seize eagerly a slice of herring or mackerel. There is little play about the cod. It is simply a question of pulling through the water from ten to seventy or eighty pounds. Halibut, the largest fish caught in those regions, often weigh as much as four hundred pounds. When firmly hooked, they are hauled to the side of the boat, and despatched with pikes before being drawn into it. The haddock, though smaller than the cod, is more lively in its movements, and is usually fished for in somewhat shallower water. The hake is a kind of degenerate cod, lacking its delicate flavour, and much less valuable in the market. From two long, hair-like projections on either side of its gills it is commonly called the goat. At Ingonish we were shown a cod which had been cut in two as it was being drawn through the water by the swift rush of a shark. Some rumours also reached us of the proximity of the sea serpent, but in view of the prevalence of fog in those latitudes, we were inclined to discredit them. Yet, after making due allowance for those half-unconscious exaggerations called "fish stories," there remains plenty of interest and not a little adventure in the lives of the hardy fishermen. Their work is the chief source of wealth in the Eastern Provinces of the Dominion. Many of them every year fall victims at their post of duty, and, overwhelmed in some sudden squall, are heard of no more.

The drive from Ingonish to Baddeck presents to the traveller most varied and picturesque scenery. The first part of the journey leads over Smoky Mountain, where the road in places is perilously narrow. One trembles to think what might happen if the horses took fright and hurled the waggon down the cliff into the river whose murmur reaches us from far below. We were glad to get out for a while and pick the delicious raspberries which, in neglected luxuriance, covered the sides of the way. After the mountain had been safely passed, our road ran for some miles near the sea, and we could follow the course of a little fishing schooner which had left Ingonish before us, and with a fair wind was making for Sydney. Many of the farms which we passed were without fences. The live stock, we understood, was relegated to harmless quarters in the rear of the estate, and supposed to remain there, leaving the crops unmolested. The district of St. Anne's abounds in constant surprises of scenery. From a narrow neck of land which juts out at the head of the bay and is adorned with a lighthouse we were ferried across to the opposite shore. Our Charon was intent on making hay, and only the most persistent shouting brought him to our aid. The old scow which he commanded seemed altogether too small to accommodate our horses and waggon, but it did so, nevertheless, by the most rigid economy of space, and landed us in safety at Englishtown, a rather dilapidated village which in its struggle with time seemed to have had the worst of it. Possibly its deterioration began with the death of the Cape Breton giant who about thirty years ago brought glory to the place by having his home there, and who still gives it a measure of renown through the records of his prowess and the bequest of a suit of clothes which may be seen by the admirers of greatness.

George Eliot remarks that "among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous." But she is speaking of prophecy in regard to individuals. At all events, one can scarcely visit Cape Breton without hazarding some forecast of the future, and that of a hopeful kind. The population of the island is about 85,000, but its resources would enable it easily to maintain at least five times that number. More than half its area is well adapted for agri-

culture. It has large and valuable forests still untouched. The centre of the island consists of carboniferous rocks, and only a small beginning is as yet made among its rich coal deposits. The climate in many respects, is unsurpassed in Canada. The winters are milder than in the western parts of the Dominion, and there is less fog than on the Nova Scotia frontier. The summer heat is tempered by the sea within and around, so that the thermometer seldom rises above 75° or 80° Fahrenheit, whereas in Ontario and Quebec it is sometimes over 100°. Among the rugged hills of the north a Scotch crofter would find little difficulty in imagining himself at home, and would be in no danger of starving. If the variety and beauty of Bras d'or scenery were better known, it would become one of the favourite summer resorts of the continent. Every season a larger number, both of Canadian and American tourists, find their way to Cape Breton. While the success of the fishermen varies from year to year, there is no sign of exhaustion in this industry. The value of the fisheries of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton for 1887 was over \$9,000,000. The railway in course of construction will give a great impetus to the island. The work is being pushed forward vigorously, and tenders are now called for by the Dominion Government for the erection of a substantial iron bridge at the Grand Narrows. In spite of that minority of pessimists who can be found anywhere, the people of Cape Breton, as a whole, are industrious in developing its resources, confident in regard to the future, and loyal in their devotion to the British crown.

VIATOR.

## FROM WHAT FAIR WESTERN LAND?

FROM what fair Western land, O crescent moon,  
Where carnival is held this happy night,  
Beams on our earth thy bow of silver light  
The dusk air through, which moveless as in swoon  
Stirs not the faint cloud-curtain whence thy boon,  
To brooding thought brings store of fancies bright?  
The stars, wan-misted, nod in drowsy plight,  
E'en Mars glows meekly in this night's dim noon.

These sleeping dream, but thou, O beacon fair,  
Lightest o'er liquid pathways of the deep,  
To where Hesperian gardens bloom and bear,  
To where Romance on many an airy steep  
Her castles builds, where life knows naught of care  
And Youth and Love unending revel keep.

Ottawa.

J. H. BROWN.

## LONDON LETTER.

IN one of the early numbers of *The Spectator* there is a delightful paper in which Steele gives the kindest puff to his friend Mr. Stubbs, rector of St. James, Garlick-hithe, a puff so strong that even now, two centuries after it was written, it has force enough to send me to the same church for the sake of the parson who conducted the service in such a commendable fashion that Steele declares his eyes and thoughts could not wander as usual, but were confined to his prayers. He who read the confession "with such resigned humility, the absolution with such comfortable authority, the thanksgiving with such a religious joy," would be sure to touch the soft heart of Prue's uncritical husband, who one can imagine joined fervently in the hymns, crying a hearty "Amen" to the reverend gentleman. The building is practically unchanged since Steele came in that Sunday morning a little late (I think), his round face very solemn, his periwig tossed by the wind. We have been re-seated, perhaps, and some of our windows have new lights, and an altar-piece has been presented, painted by Geddes, a cousin of William Collins; but beyond these trifling alterations he would find nothing different. The congregation might strike him as scanty when compared to that it must have been in the time of the eloquent Mr. Stubbs, but it is by no means as scanty as when Dickens wandered about here from his Covent Garden lodging on those days when he thought (so he says) he deserved particularly well of himself, and had earned the right to enjoy a treat, though there has been a revival in church-going since the time of "The Uncommercial Traveller." There are still many pews empty this summer morning, and the music from Father Schmidt's organ sounds shrill and loud as we stand in our broken ranks to sing those psalms to which the essayist describes himself as listening attentively. The pulpit to-day holds nobody so dramatic as the Queen Anne pastor, (was he of the same quality as Selwyn's friend, Dr. Warren, of whom Thackeray was thinking when he sketched Sampson's portrait in "The Virginians"?) so there is no one, I think, come out of that vast stretch of country to the west of Temple Bar except myself. You see the attractions these places possess are unknown to many, and even when they are known are not considered of much importance. It comes to pass then that I sit in solitary grandeur in the curtained seat, and (unlike Steele) I let my attention wander and find myself wondering if the Mummy still stands in his case behind the panel, and if these good folk who are saying their prayers tranquilly here are aware what a curious object is kept in their midst. For you must know this St. James is the original of "St. Leonard le Size" in Besant's "The Bell of St. Paul's," and the body of which he speaks in the story is the same as the one I remember seeing years ago, and about which when the service is over and the church is empty I question the sextoness, who gives me all sorts of information.

"We had thirty of them once on a time," she says as she brings out the key of the panel and lights the taper. "Thirty of 'em, men, women, and little babies. But we was come down upon, and they made us bury 'em all in the vaults but just one. We might keep one so we chose him. He's got his toe-nails perfect: so's his finger-nails: and his teeth. Its many years since the vaults were sealed: since then we've kep' him up here."

By this time we are standing in front of one of the walls under the organ gallery. With a twist of her wrist the panel swings solemnly open; and then, the little taper-flame held close against the glass, she goes on with her story.

"We've never found out who he was. Everything had decayed about him. He's over two hundred years old, they think. We are on a hill, so the wet runs down to the river, and the vaults are always dry. Some say its a peculiar chalky sand that has preserved 'em like this; but no one don't really know, it seems to me. Have you looked enough? Aint it a curious sight?"

From behind the glass the grey figure, reminding me in colour of the bodies one sees in the Museum at Pompeii, gazes out into the dim passage. He stands upright, his arms (crossed no longer over his breast as when for the last time his people looked at him in the darkened room) fallen to his side. "Who knows," says Sir Thomas Browne, "the fate of his bones?" It was meant as a compliment that he should be given this fine position in the church where he shares the honours with the beautiful carved pulpit and pretty old font; but I think had his wishes been consulted he would rather have remained down stairs in the dry vaults by the side of his friends and neighbours. There, no one would be disturbing his peace. His small gleaming teeth and long fingers would have remained unsung, certainly, but this unnatural popularity can only be embarrassing. Far better, if the poor Mummy has any delicacy, the quiet coffin, than their continual locking and unlocking of the oaken press, these perpetual exclamations of wonder or disgust. The gravedigger who said a man would lie eight or nine years in the ground ere he rot ("a tanner will last for nine years") perhaps knew nothing of the advantage of a vault on a hill; but I hear his opinion that water is a sore decayer of bodies confirmed this morning by my guide, who may or may not have remembered her Shakespeare. Then, after a few moments' survey, the panel swings back into its place, and the Londoner who last walked this narrow lane so many, many years ago is left for the present to his repose; and the light is blown out and the keys put away. So I find myself blinking in the sunshine on the steps of the church, under the clock crowned with the figure of the Saint and decorated with his cockle-shell emblem (the sextoness slips away down one of the little courts to her dinner) and I call to mind how on last Ascension Day I witnessed the Beating of the Parish Bounds from this vantage-ground, and how much the ceremony had entertained me.

I had arrived early to find the entrance encompassed by a handful of choir boys waiting to be let in. But the doors were not to open till eleven, and it wanted ten long minutes to that hour. At first it was stagnation; then a bright youth, discovering and producing a length of something from the pocket of his best suit, which does not, I hope, generally harbour anything so secular, there was suddenly a "corner" in string. The excitement, fraught with danger for the lucky possessor of the treasure, who gasped for air and bade his comrades cease scowdging, was an astonishment to one who, like myself, had never laid any particular value on this eagerly sought after commodity. After a deal of haggling, small portions were bitten off for the first two or three transactions; then the bluntest knife I ever saw was brought into play, and the irregular size of the pieces was a source of pride, or the reverse, to the eager lads who claimed them on certain conditions connected, I think, with buttons; but nothing was paid up, only promises made. I took my courage in both hands and asked one proud young speculator what he was going to do with his length of five inches—insufficient for a parcel, or a toy, or to fly a kite—and I was answered with contempt, "Tie it round my stick, o' course." I saw no stick. I don't believe he had one. If he had, why not have brought it with him? But granting the stick, why should whip cord be considered such a superior decorative? Leaning up against the great key-holes and locks, we were so absorbed in our stock exchange excitement that no one heard the bolts being withdrawn, and it was only by great presence of mind that we did not fall over the threshold when the doors were of a sudden flung open.

In a few minutes a pious little procession, bearing tall osier-wands in their hands and headed by the beadle in his black cape trimmed with gold, were gravely paraded round the empty aisles to the music of the organ. The clergymen, guardians and wardens of the church followed the boys, wearing blue rosettes and carrying bouquets of flowers, of which they tried not to look ashamed. When they had gone round the consecrated bounds they came, two and two, into the street, amid the cheers of the spectators, and there, being taken in hand by a couple of policemen to keep off the crowd, they proceeded at a fast trot round the parish. It is not a large one, and yet it took nearly an hour before we returned, breathless, to the church. For each of the boundary marks had to be touched with the tall wands whenever we came upon them, and the choir-boys must cheer, hip, hip, hurrah. Then there were side courts to go down, and warehouses to enter, and offices to go through, in at the front, out at the back. During the walk I was told that till compara-