

and Chamberlain and their respective colleagues have acquired a new interest and importance. Canadians may both hope for a just settlement, and fear lest the desire to take the flood of fortune at its tide should cause them some sacrifices beyond those they are prepared to make in the interests of peace, security, and a serene future. There must be concessions, whether existing treaty relations are to be amended, or a new series of relations created, and as the Fishery laws and Administration of Canada, during the past two seasons, have put the American fishermen down to their naked legal rights, it seems evident that whatever the indirect or ultimate consequences may be, the immediate concessions must come mainly from the Canadian side. Still, the United States have commercial privileges at their disposal that Canadians would regard as a full equivalent for all that they have been pressed to surrender of their Fishery rights, and the popular temper here is so shaping itself towards Protection that Mr. Bayard and his colleagues may find themselves in a position to make good to Canada whatever she is asked to abandon. At all events, the authoritative belief of the moment here is, that the negotiators will reach an agreement, which both Governments will ratify, and all concerned will accept with less demur than might, on the whole, be expected. For Mr. Chamberlain, and, in a less degree, for Mr. Bayard, such a consummation would have a personal interest of a kind that all readers of *THE WEEK* will appreciate, and under the invigorating impulse of desire, mingled with hope, both gentlemen may be expected to labour zealously towards a common end during the next few weeks.

B.

TO A POET.

COME not to me with many-coloured words,
That stifle like the scent of hot-house flowers,
Or sparkle, gem-like, lull like summer showers,
Or trip, and trill, and tilt, like idle birds.

For I am weak, who would be strong and wise,
And blind to the broad light that flows above,
And wishful at the worshipped feet of love,
And earth-bound, moaning for the distant skies.

How did the sated heart within me burn,
When on great Nature's tender breast you lay,
And looked on heaven, and through its bonds of clay,
You felt your unwinged spirit yearn and yearn.

Give me a phrase to match the sounding sea,
A line to put the sunset hues to shame;
Of spring's hid meaning tell me but the name,
Of summer's pomp, of autumn's mystery.

Oh, we are walled with wonders, and our days
Are a divine, unceasing miracle!
Still on our lifeless toys we bend our dull,
Cold eyes, and ask, "Where are the sun's glad rays?"

Give me a common verse that holds a heart,
That feels its life-blood warm in every line;
For I am weary of the clink and shine,
The tinsels, and the fripperies of art.

A. ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

LONDON LETTER.

THERE is a delightful part of Town, immensely liked by some, abused vindictively by others, possessing staunch friends and bitter enemies. The former speak of it with much affection, the latter stigmatize it as at the very end of all things, *Gott verlassen*, as the Germans say, and declare they would rather leave London altogether than live out here. But Chelsea, like other successful folk, needs neither praise or blame, and contentedly goes on, building red brick palaces with their faces set toward the south and the river; puts in order the many Jacobean houses with which its streets are studded, and in which the art students, male and female, most do congregate; plants trees on its picturesque embankment, and trims the shady gardens belonging to the Apothecaries and to the Soldiers' Hospital. Then, of a Sunday, bells ring out from the square tower by the water, and to the church, little altered indeed since Sir Thomas More murmured the same prayers here we use to-day under the tattered banners hanging from the roof by the side of alabaster and marble monuments three hundred years old, Chelsea comes to worship: comforting itself with the knowledge that far though it may be from the noise of Nash's stuccoed Waterloo Place, or De Quincey's "stone-hearted" Oxford Street, that inconvenience is amply atoned for by the sound of the tide as it makes its way towards Hammersmith by the fresh wind blowing straight from the Surrey hills, or by the tokens left of former generations on every side, speaking eloquently to the most careless observer,—a thousand marks and signs as interesting as any I have seen in Pompeii. As I lean against the rickety pier and watch the little steamers

come puffing up, to and from Westminster Bridge, I know I for one would not diminish by a yard the two or three miles lying between me and Park Lane. Life seems different here, somehow, far from great shops and theatres, easier, simpler, more like what Ruskin would have us make it; and yet, these embankment palaces, with their glittering plate-glass windows, are first cousins to the mansions in Grosvenor Square, and gradually, but surely, encroaching on the quaint houses whose inhabitants once shouted for King James, will soon, at the present rate of progress, turn this riverside village into an offshoot of Pont Street and Sloane Square, when simplicity will fly with the downfall of small oaken rooms and delicate hand-wrought decorations. Sunshine—it's like a May day this winter afternoon—gilds Boehm's fine statue of an old man, who, with his books and armchair, is looking on at all the well-known sights, and I wonder what Carlyle would say could he but see those huge flats, sprung up like Aladdin's castle, so out of character with their old-fashioned surroundings. Even the knowledge that they are called after his name would not soften his wrath at the cruel alteration in the spot where he lived for over half a century, and to which he must have become attached after his manner. Heaven help the architect of these abominations should the author of *Sartor* come across him in the under-world.

Up the narrow street to my right, and passing the tablet on which is cut, in open spectator type, "This is Cheyne Row, 1708," I come to the home of the shrewd, unhappy, dissatisfied Haddington doctor's daughter, to the home so mismanaged by both husband and wife. It has never been let since Carlyle died, and as I turn the key in the rusty lock, and stumble into the half-dark hall, I expect to meet the ghosts of its late owners, down to the barking spirit of little Nero. But not a mouse stirs in the mysterious passage, full of shadows; I hear no sound in the unutterably dreary empty dining-rooms; no footfall follows mine up the shallow stairs whither so many, so many, have gone before us, and the study crowning the house is ghastly in the stillness which has fallen on it since the Scotchman, with his bitter tongue and bitter pen made of his life such an exceedingly unlovely work of art. It requires a well-bred person—not necessarily *high-bred*, but *well-bred*—to bear pain like a gentleman; and as examples of what I mean read the account Darwin's son gives of the manner in which his father triumphed over his ailments; remember Southey's description of the sickly sea-sick hero, our sailor Nelson; think of the way Lamb worked in his peculiarly delicate, brilliant fashion, the while insanity, ill-health, cares of the most grievous sort, lurked by his side. Then listen to Carlyle and his roars, as of a wild beast, at an indigestion which was to an immense extent the result of his own indiscretions. "If my father had not taken so much calomel it would have been better for himself, and consequently for us all," says Trollope in his new book of Reminiscences, and surely if Carlyle had been more sensible in his choice of food he would not have been "so gay ill to live with," as his mother remarked. "My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else can give you any comfort when you come to lie here." Lockhart has told us of these, Scott's last words, and I think they are a sermon in themselves. "Learn ere you grow old to love and to pray," advises the author of *Vanity Fair*. Did Carlyle ever practise the latter, and did he not only indulge in the former when too late? What matter the writing of books which succeeding generations will, maybe, never care to open, compared to a wise life lived by a wise man, a life that is an example to his children and his children's children, of far greater value than an heritage of a few pages over which critics dispute, and Time sits in judgment, dooming the papers, after a more or less short existence, to oblivion. Poor Mrs. Carlyle! that ill-balanced, fretful, clever creature, requiring as much sunshine, both morally and physically, as possible, shut up in this lonely house, with a blank wall in front, and a dull strip of garden at the back—what weary years she must have lived through. No wonder her tongue grew sharper and her heart harder. "Irving would never have heard voices if he had married *me*," she said, but I can't imagine that she would have made Irving especially happy. If she had chosen better—a slave instead of a hard taskmaster—we should have had, undoubtedly, amusing caustic books from her pen, for how admirable and truthful is much of her dialogue between her watch and canary. She would have been, I suppose, a tract-writer, an essayist, an English Margaret Fuller, but fate, in the shape of the Ecclefechan peasant's son, interposed; and instead of a more or less useful writing woman, often dissatisfied, we hear of an ailing housekeeper, generally unhappy. Come out through the old doorway into the yard, and you will find the tree, bare and leafless now, under which Carlyle sat to be sketched by Mrs. Allingham, and here is the grassplot on which Mrs. Carlyle rigged her tent in the hot summer days, and here the flower-beds by which she anxiously watched the famous gooseberry bush, or the growth of the seeds and cuttings from her Scotch home. How soon it's all over, the seemingly endless sorrow and trouble, storms and calms, east winds and summer breezes, leaving no trace on the hardy little house of two hundred years, on the swaying trees, and dusty shrubs, and small unshaven lawn. Then come the days when you and I criticize, find fault with, hardly tolerate, work over which a man and woman made themselves most truly unhappy: work which went far towards giving the author a life as miserable as any Portland convict's, and the author's wife a heartache—a terrible disease, this—which must have been hard enough for the proud-spirited woman to bear. These walls remember bright-eyed wives who sang to their babies, powdered and patched mothers who romped with their children; and they would fain put away from them for ever the recollection of that gloomy episode when a lonely couple lived on forlorn in the parlours where once danced small subjects of His Majesty George III., when harsh words were spoken and written in the rooms which once echoed to little voices. A few days ago, Addison's beautiful unapproach-