

Mitton Geraldine Edith

Chelsea



Geraldine Mitton

Chelsea

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Mitton G. E. Geraldine Edith Chelsea The Fascination of London

PREFATORY NOTE

A survey of London, a record of the greatest of all cities, that should preserve her history, her historical and literary associations, her mighty buildings, past and present, a book that should comprise all that Londoners love, all that they ought to know of their heritage from the past – this was the work on which Sir Walter Besant was engaged when he died.

As he himself said of it: “This work fascinates me more than anything else I’ve ever done. Nothing at all like it has ever been attempted before. I’ve been walking about London for the last thirty years, and I find something fresh in it every day.”

He had seen one at least of his dreams realized in the People’s Palace, but he was not destined to see this mighty work on London take form. He died when it was still incomplete. His scheme included several volumes on the history of London as a whole. These he finished up to the end of the eighteenth century, and they form a record of the great city practically unique, and exceptionally interesting, compiled by one who had the qualities both of novelist and historian, and who knew how to make the dry bones live. The volume on the eighteenth century, which Sir Walter called a “very big chapter indeed, and particularly interesting,” will shortly be issued by Messrs. A. and C. Black, who had undertaken the publication of the Survey.

Sir Walter’s idea was that the next two volumes should be a regular and systematic perambulation of London by different persons, so that the history of each parish should be complete in itself. This was a very original feature in the great scheme, and one in which he took the keenest interest. Enough has been done of this section to warrant its issue in the form originally intended, but in the meantime it is proposed to select some of the most interesting of the districts and publish them as a series of booklets, attractive alike to the local inhabitant and the student of London, because much of the interest and the history of London lie in these street associations. For this purpose Chelsea, Westminster, the Strand, and Hampstead have been selected for publication first, and have been revised and brought up to date.

The difficulty of finding a general title for the series was very great, for the title desired was one that would express concisely the undying charm of London – that is to say, the continuity of her past history with the present times. In streets and stones, in names and palaces, her history is written for those who can read it, and the object of the series is to bring forward these associations, and to make them plain. The solution of the difficulty was found in the words of the man who loved London and planned the great scheme. The work “fascinated” him, and it was because of these associations that it did so. These links between past and present in themselves largely constitute The Fascination of London.

G. E. M.

PART I

The name Chelsea, according to Faulkner and Lysons, only began to be used in the early part of the eighteenth century. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the place was known as Chelsey, and before that time as Chelceth or Chelchith. The very earliest record is in a charter of King Edward the Confessor, where it is spelt Cealchyth. In Domesday Book it is noted as Cercehede and Chelched. The word is derived variously. Newcourt ascribes it to the Saxon word *ceald*, or *cele*, signifying cold, combined with the Saxon *hyth*, or *hyd*, a port or haven. Norden believes it to be due to the word “chesel” (*ceosol*, or *cesol*), a bank “which the sea casteth up of sand or pebble-stones, thereof called Cheselsey, briefly Chelsey, as is Chelsey [Winchelsea?] in Sussex.” Skinner agrees with him substantially, deriving the principal part of the word from banks of sand, and the *ea* or *ey* from land situated near the water; yet he admits it is written in ancient records Cealchyth – “chalky haven.” Lysons asserts that if local circumstances allowed it he would have derived it from “hills of chalk.” Yet, as there is neither hill nor chalk in the parish, this derivation cannot be regarded as satisfactory. The difficulty of the more generally received interpretation – viz., shelves of gravel near the water – is that the ancient spelling of the name did undoubtedly end in *hith* or *heth*, and not in *ea* or *ey*.

BOUNDARIES

The dividing line which separated the old parish of Chelsea from the City of Westminster was determined by a brook called the Westbourne, which took its rise near West End in Hampstead. It flowed through Bayswater and into Hyde Park. It supplied the water of the Serpentine, which we owe to the fondness of Queen Caroline for landscape gardening. This well-known piece of water was afterwards supplied from the Chelsea waterworks. The Westbourne stream then crossed Knightsbridge, and from this point formed the eastern boundary of St. Luke's parish, Chelsea. The only vestige of the rivulet now remaining is to be seen at its southern extremity, where, having become a mere sewer, it empties itself into the Thames about 300 yards above the bridge. The name survives in Westbourne Park and Westbourne Street. The boundary line of the present borough of Chelsea is slightly different; it follows the eastern side of Lowndes Square, and thence goes down Lowndes Street, Chesham Street, and zigzags through Eaton Place and Terrace, Cliveden Place, and Westbourne Street, breaking off from the last-named at Whitaker Street, thence down Holbein Place, a bit of Pimlico, and Bridge Road to the river.

In a map of Chelsea made in 1664 by James Hamilton, the course of the original rivulet is clearly shown. The northern boundary of Chelsea begins at Knightsbridge. The north-western, that between Chelsea and Kensington, runs down Basil and Walton Streets, and turns into the Fulham Road at its junction with the Marlborough Road. It follows the course of the Fulham Road to Stamford Bridge, near Chelsea Station. The western boundary, as well as the eastern, had its origin in a stream which rose to the north-west of Notting Hill. Its site is now occupied by the railway-line (West London extension); the boundary runs on the western side of this until it joins an arm of Chelsea Creek, from which point the Creek forms the dividing line to the river.

The parish of Chelsea, thus defined, is roughly triangular in shape, and is divided by the King's Road into two nearly equal triangles.

An outlying piece of land at Kensal Town belonged to Chelsea parish, but is not included in the borough.

The population in 1801 was 12,079. In the year 1902 (the latest return) it is reckoned at 73,842.

Bowack, in an account of Chelsea in 1705, estimates the inhabited houses at 300; they are now computed at 8,641.

HISTORY

The first recorded instance of the mention of Chelsea is about 785, when Pope Adrian sent legates to England for the purpose of reforming the religion, and they held a synod at Cealchythe.

In the reign of Edward the Confessor Thurstan gave Chilchelle or Chilcheya, which he held of the King, to Westminster Abbey. This gift was confirmed by a charter which is in the Saxon language, and is still preserved in the British Museum. Gervase, Abbot of Westminster, natural son of King Stephen, aliened the Manor of Chelchithe; he bestowed it upon his mother, Dameta, to be held by her in fee, paying annually to the church at Westminster the sum of £4. In Edward III.'s reign one Robert de Heyle leased the Manor of Chelsith to the Abbot and Convent of Westminster during his own lifetime, for which they were to make certain payments: "£20 per annum, to provide him daily with two white loaves, two flagons of convent ale, and once a year a robe of Esquier's silk." The manor at that time was valued at £25 16s. 6d. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster hold among their records several court rolls of the Manor of Chelsea during the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II. With the exception that one Simon Bayle seems to have been lessee of the Manor House in 1455, we know nothing definite of it until the reign of Henry VII., after which the records are tolerably clear. It was then held by Sir Reginald Bray, and from him it descended to his niece Margaret, who married Lord Sandys. Lord Sandys gave or sold it to Henry VIII., and it formed part of the jointure of Queen Catherine Parr, who resided there for some time with her fourth husband, Lord Seymour.

Afterwards it appears to have been granted to the Duke of Northumberland, who was beheaded in 1553 for his attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne. The Duchess of Northumberland held it for her life, and at her death it was granted to John Caryl, who only held it for a few months before parting with it to John Bassett, "notwithstanding which," says Lysons, "Lady Anne of Cleves, in the account of her funeral, is said to have died at the King and Quene's majestys' Place of Chelsey beside London in the same year."

Queen Elizabeth gave it to the Earl of Somerset's widow for life, and at her death it was granted to John Stanhope, afterwards first Lord Stanhope, subject to a yearly rent-charge. It is probable that he soon surrendered it, for we find it shortly after granted by Queen Elizabeth to Katherine, Lady Howard, wife of the Lord Admiral. Then it was held by the Howards for several generations, confirmed by successive grants, firstly to Margaret, Countess of Nottingham, and then to James Howard, son of the Earl of Nottingham, who had the right to hold it for forty years after the decease of his mother. She, however, survived him, and in 1639 James, Duke of Hamilton, purchased her interest in it, and entered into possession. He only held it until the time of the Commonwealth, when it was seized and sold; but it seems that the purchasers, Thomas Smithby and Robert Austin, only bought it to hold in trust for the heirs of Hamilton, for in 1657 Anne, daughter and coheirress of the Duke of Hamilton, and her husband, Lord Douglas, sold it to Charles Cheyne. He bought it with part of the large dower brought him by his wife, Lady Jane Cheyne, as is recorded on her tombstone in Chelsea Church. Sir Hans Sloane in 1712 purchased it from the then Lord Cheyne. He left two daughters, who married respectively Lord Cadogan and George Stanley. As the Stanleys died out in the second generation, their share reverted by will to the Cadogans, in whom it is still vested.

TOPOGRAPHY AND DETAIL

Beginning our account of Chelsea at a point in the eastern boundary in the Pimlico Road, we have on the right-hand side Holbein Place, a modern street so named in honour of the great painter, who was a frequent visitor at Sir Thomas More's house in Chelsea. Holbein Place curves to the west, and finally enters Sloane Square.

In the Pimlico Road, opposite to the barracks, there stood until 1887-88 a shop bearing the sign of the "Old Chelsea Bun House." But this was not the original Bun House, which stood further eastward, outside the Chelsea boundary. It had a colonnade projecting over the pavement, and it was fashionable to visit it in the morning. George II., Queen Caroline, and the Princesses frequently came to it, and later George III. and Queen Charlotte. A crowd of some 50,000 people gathered in the neighbourhood on Good Friday, and a record of 240,000 buns being sold on that day is reported. Swift, in his *Journal to Stella*, 1712, writes: "Pray are not fine buns sold here in our town as the rare Chelsea Buns?" In 1839 the place was pulled down and sold by auction.

The barracks, on the south side of the road, face westwards, and have a frontage of a thousand feet in length. As a matter of fact, they are not included in the borough of Chelsea, though the old parish embraced them; but as they are Chelsea Barracks, and as we are here more concerned with sentiment than surveyor's limits, it would be inexcusable to omit all mention of them.

The chapel stands behind the drill-yard at the back. It is calculated that it seats 800 people. The organ was built by Hill. The brass lectern was erected in 1888 in memory of Bishop Claughton. The east end is in the form of an apse, with seven deeply-set windows, of which only two are coloured. The walls of the chancel are inlaid with alabaster. Round the walls are glazed tiles to the memory of the men of the Guards who have died. The oak pulpit is modern, and the font, cut from a solid block of dark-veined marble and supported by four pillars, stands on a small platform of tessellated pavement. Passing out of the central gateway of the barracks and turning northward, we come to the junction of Pimlico Road and Queen's Road. From this point to the corner of Smith Street the road is known as Queen's Road. Along the first part of its southern side is the ancient burial-ground of the hospital. At the western end of this the tombstones cluster thickly, though many of the inscriptions are now quite illegible. The burial-ground was consecrated in 1691, and the first pensioner, Simon Box, was buried here in 1692. In 1854 the ground was closed by the operation of the Intramural Burials Act, but by special permission General Sir Colin Halkett was buried here two years later. His tomb is a conspicuous object about midway down the centre path. It is said that two female warriors, who dressed in men's clothes and served as soldiers, Christina Davies and Hannah Snell, rest here, but their names cannot be found. The first Governor of the Royal Hospital, Sir Thomas Ogle, K.T., was buried here in 1702, aged eighty-four, and also the first Commandant of the Royal Military Asylum, Lieutenant-Colonel George Williamson, in 1812. The pensioners are now buried in the Brompton Cemetery. For complete account of the Royal Hospital and the Ranelagh Gardens adjoining, see p. [PART III](#).

At the corner between Turks Row and Lower Sloane Street there is a great red-brick mansion rising several stories higher than its neighbours. This is an experiment of the Ladies' Dwelling Company to provide rooms for ladies obliged to live in London on small means, and has a restaurant below, where meals can be obtained at a reasonable rate. The first block was opened in February, 1889. It is in a very prosperous condition, the applications altogether surpassing the accommodation. The large new flats and houses called Sloane Court and Revelstoke and Mendelssohn Gardens have been built quite recently, and replace very "mean streets." The little church of St. Jude's – district church of Holy Trinity – stands on the north side of the Row, and at the back are the National and infant schools attached to it. It was opened for service in 1844. In 1890 it was absorbed into Holy Trinity parish. It seats about 800 persons. From Turks Row we

pass into Franklin's Row. On Hamilton's map (corrected to 1717) we find marked "Mr. Franklin's House," not on the site of the present Row, but opposite the north-western corner of Burton's Court, at the corner of the present St. Leonard's Terrace and Smith Street. The name Franklin has been long connected with Chelsea, for in 1790 we find John Franklin and Mary Franklin bequeathing money to the poor of Chelsea. At the south end is an old public-house, with overhanging story and red-tiled roof; it is called the Royal Hospital, and contrasts quaintly with its towering modern red-brick neighbours.

The entrance gates of the Royal Military Asylum, popularly known as the Duke of York's School, open on to Franklin's Row just before it runs into Cheltenham Terrace. The building itself stands back behind a great space of green grass. It is of brick faced with Portland stone, and is of very solid construction. Between the great elm-trees on the lawn can be seen the immense portico, with the words "The Royal Military Asylum for the Children of the Soldiers of the Regular Army" running across the frieze.

The building is in three wings, enclosing at the back laundry, hospital, Commandant's house, etc., and great playgrounds for the boys. Long low dormitories, well ventilated, on the upper floors in the central building contain forty beds apiece, while those in the two wings are smaller, with thirteen beds each. Below the big dormitories are the dining-rooms, the larger one decorated with devices of arms; these were brought from the Tower and arranged by the boys themselves. There are 550 inmates, admitted between the ages of nine and eleven, and kept until they are fourteen or fifteen. The foundation was established by the Duke of York in 1801, and was ready for occupation by 1803. It was designed to receive 700 boys and 300 girls, and there was an infant establishment connected with it in the Isle of Wight. In 1823 the girls were removed elsewhere. There are a number of boys at the sister establishment, the Hibernian Asylum, in Ireland. The Commandant, Colonel G. A. W. Forrest, is allowed 6½d. per diem for the food of each boy, and the bill of fare is extraordinarily good. Cocoa and bread-and-butter, or bread-and-jam, for breakfast and tea; meat, pudding, vegetables, and bread, for dinner. Cake on special fête-days as an extra. The boys do credit to their rations, and show by their bright faces and energy their good health and spirits. They are under strict military discipline, and both by training and heredity have a military bias. There is no compulsion exercised, but fully 90 per cent. of those who are eligible finally enter the army; and the school record shows a long list of commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and even two Major-Generals, who owed their early training to the Chelsea Asylum. The site on which the Asylum stands was bought from Lord Cadogan; it occupies about twelve acres, and part of it was formerly used for market-gardens.

One of the schoolrooms has still the pulpit, and a raised gallery running round, which mark it as having been the original chapel; but the present chapel stands at the corner of King's Road and Cheltenham Terrace. On Sunday morning the boys parade on the green in summer and on the large playground in winter before they march in procession to the chapel with their band playing, a scene which has been painted by Mr. Morris, A.R.A., as "The Sons of the Brave." The chaplain is the Rev. G. H. Andrews. The gallery of the chapel is open to anyone, and is almost always well filled. The annual expenditure of the Asylum is supplied by a Parliamentary grant.

On Hamilton's Survey the ground now occupied by the Duke of York's School is marked "Glebe," and exactly opposite to it, at the corner where what is now Cheltenham Terrace joins King's Road, is a small house in an enclosure called "Robins' Garden." On this spot now stands Whitelands Training College for school-mistresses. "In 1839 the Rev. Wyatt Edgell gave £1,000 to the National Society to be the nucleus for a building fund, whenever the National Society could undertake to build a female training college." But it was not until 1841 that the college for training school-mistresses was opened at Whitelands. In 1850 grants were made from the Education Department and several of the City Companies, and the necessary enlargements and improvements were set on foot. Some of the earlier students were very young, but in 1858 the age of admission

was raised to eighteen. From time to time the buildings have been enlarged. Mr. Ruskin instituted in 1880 a May Day Festival, to be held annually, and as long as he lived, he himself presented to the May Queen a gold cross and chain, and distributed to her comrades some of his volumes. Mr. Ruskin also presented to the college many books, coins, and pictures, and proved himself a good friend. In the chapel there is a beautiful east window erected to the memory of Miss Gillott, one of the former governesses. The present Principal is the Rev. J. P. Faunthorpe, F.R.G.S.

On the west side is Walpole Street, so called from the fact that Sir Robert Walpole is supposed to have lodged in a house on this site before moving into Walpole House, now in the grounds of the Royal Hospital. Walpole Street leads us into St. Leonard's Terrace, formerly Green's Row, which runs along the north side of the great court known as Burton's Court, treated in the account of the Hospital. In this terrace there is nothing calling for remark. Opening out of it, parallel to Walpole Street, runs the Royal Avenue, also connected with the Hospital. To the north, facing King's Road, lies Wellington Square, named after the famous Wellington, whose brother was Rector of Chelsea (1805). The centre of the square is occupied by a double row of trees. St. Leonard's Terrace ends in Smith Street, the southern part of which was formerly known as Ormond Row. The southern half is full of interest. Durham House, now occupied by Sir Bruce Maxwell Seton, stands on the site of Old Durham House, about which very little is known. It may have been the town residence of the Bishops of Durham, but tradition records it not. Part of the building was of long, narrow bricks two inches wide, thus differing from the present ones of two and a half inches; some of the same sort are still preserved in the wall of Sir Thomas More's garden. This points to its having been of the Elizabethan or Jacobean period. Yet in Hamilton's Survey it is not marked; instead, there is a house called "Ship House," a tavern which is said to have been resorted to by the workmen building the Hospital. It is possible this is the same house which degenerated into a tavern, and then recovered its ancient name. Connected with this until quite recently there was a narrow passage between the houses in Paradise Row called Ship Alley, and supposed to have led from Gough House to Ship House. This was closed by the owner after a lawsuit about right of way.

A little to the north of Durham House was one of the numerous dwellings in Chelsea known as Manor House. It was the residence of the Steward of the Manor, and had great gardens reaching back as far as Flood Street, then Queen Street. This is marked in a map of 1838. This house was afterwards used as a consumption hospital, and formed the germ from which the Brompton Hospital sprang. On its site stands Durham Place. Below Durham Place is a little row of old houses, or, rather, cottages, with plaster fronts, and at the corner a large public-house known as the Chelsea Pensioner. On the site of this, the corner house, the local historian Faulkner lived. He was born in 1777, and wrote histories of Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington, Brentford, Chiswick, and Ealing, besides his invaluable work on Chelsea. He is always accurate, always painstaking, and if his style is sometimes dry, his is, at all events, the groundwork and foundation on which all subsequent histories of Chelsea have been reared. Later on he moved into Smith Street, where he died in 1855. He is buried in the Brompton Road Cemetery.

The continuation of St. Leonard's Terrace is Redesdale Street; we pass down this and up Radnor Street, into which the narrow little Smith Terrace opens out. Smith Street and Smith Terrace are named after their builder. Radnor House stood at the south-eastern corner of Flood Street, but the land owned by the Radnors gave its name to the adjacent street. At the northern corner of Radnor Street stands a small Welsh chapel built of brick. In the King's Road, between Smith and Radnor Streets, formerly stood another manor-house. Down Shawfield Street we come back into Redesdale Street, out of which opens Tedworth Square. Robinson's Street is a remnant of Robinson's Lane, the former name of Flood Street, a corruption of "Robins his street," from Mr. Robins, whose house is marked on Hamilton's map. Christ Church is in Christchurch Street, and is built of brick in a modern style. It holds 1,000 people. The organ and the dark oak pulpit came from an old church at Queenhithe, and were presented by the late Bishop of London, and the carving on the latter is

attributed to Grinling Gibbons. At the back of the church are National Schools. Christchurch Street, which opens into Queen's Road West (old Paradise Row), was made by the demolition of some old houses fronting the Apothecaries' Garden.

At the extreme corner of Flood Street and Queen's Road West stood Radnor House, called by Hamilton "Lady Radnor's House." In 1660, when still only Lord Robartes, the future Earl of Radnor entertained Charles II. here to supper. Pepys, the indefatigable, has left it on record that he "found it to be the prettiest contrived house" that he ever saw. Lord Cheyne (Viscount Newhaven) married the Dowager Duchess of Radnor, who was at that time living in Radnor House. After the death of the first Earl, the family name is recorded as Roberts in the registers, an instance of the etymological carelessness of the time. In Radnor House was one of the pillared arcades fashionable in the Jacobean period, of which a specimen is still to be seen over the doorway of the dining-room in the Queen's House. On the first floor was a remarkably fine fireplace, which has been transferred bodily to one of the modern houses in Cheyne Walk. At the back of Radnor House were large nursery-gardens known as "Mr. Watt's gardens" from the time of Hamilton (1717) until far into the present century. An old hostel adjoining Radnor House was called the Duke's Head, after the Duke of Cumberland, of whom a large oil-painting hung in the principal room.

From this corner to the west gates of the Hospital was formerly Paradise Row. Here lived the Duchess of Mazarin, sister to the famous Cardinal. She was married to the Duke de la Meilleraie, who adopted her name. It is said that Charles II. when in exile had wished to marry her, but was prevented by her brother, who saw at the time no prospect of a Stuart restoration. The Duchess, after four years of unhappy married life with the husband of her brother's choice, fled to England. Charles, by this time restored to his throne, received her, and settled £4,000 on her from the secret service funds. She lived in Chelsea in Paradise Row. Tradition asserts very positively that the house was at one end of the row, but at which remains a disputed point. L'Estrange and others have inclined to the belief that it was at the east end, the last of a row of low creeper-covered houses still standing, fronted by gardens and high iron gates. The objection to this is that these are not the last houses in the line, but are followed by one or two of a different style.

The end of all, now a public-house, is on the site of Faulkner's house, and it is probable that if the Duchess had lived there, he, coming after so comparatively short an interval, would have mentioned the fact; as it is, he never alludes to the exact locality. Even £4,000 a year was quite inadequate to keep up this lady's extravagant style of living. The gaming at her house ran high; it is reported that the guests left money under their plates to pay for what they had eaten. St. Evremond, poet and man of the world, was frequently there, and he seems to have constituted himself "guide, philosopher, and friend" to the wayward lady. She was only fifty-two when she died in 1699, and the chief records of her life are found in St. Evremond's writings. He, her faithful admirer to the end, was buried in Westminster Abbey.

A near neighbour of the Duchess's was Mrs. Mary Astell, one of the early pioneers in the movement for the education for women. She published several volumes in defence of her sex, and proposed to found a ladies' college. She gave up the project, however, when it was condemned by Bishop Burnet. She was ridiculed by the wits of her time – Swift, Steele, and Addison – but she was undoubtedly a very able woman.

The Duke of St. Albans, Nell Gwynne's son, also had a house in Paradise Row. The Duke of Ormond lived in Ormond House, two or three doors from the east corner. In 1805 the comedian Suett died in this row. Further down towards the river are enormous new red-brick mansions. Tite Street runs right through from Tedworth Square to the Embankment, being cut almost in half by Queen's Road West. It is named after Sir W. Tite, M.P. The houses are modern, built in the Queen Anne style, and are mostly of red brick. To this the white house built for Mr. Whistler is an exception; it is a square, unpretentious building faced with white bricks.

At different times the names of many artists have been associated with this street, which is still a favourite one with men of the brush. The great block of studios – the Tower House – rises up to an immense height on the right, almost opposite to the Victoria Hospital for Children. The nucleus of this hospital is ancient Gough House, one of the few old houses still remaining in Chelsea. John Vaughan, third and last Earl of Carbery, built it in the beginning of the eighteenth century. He had been Governor of Jamaica under Charles II., and had left behind him a bad reputation. He did not live long to enjoy his Chelsea home, for Faulkner tells us he died in his coach going to it in 1713. Sir Robert Walpole, whose land adjoined, bought some of the grounds to add to his own.

In 1866 the Victoria Hospital for Children was founded by a number of medical men, chief of whom were Edward Ellis, M.D., and Sydney Hayward, M.D. There was a dispute about the site, which ended in the foundation of two hospitals – this and the Belgrave one. This one was opened first, and consequently earned the distinction of being the first children's hospital opened after that in Ormond Street. At first only six beds were provided; but there are now seventy-five, and an additional fifty at the convalescent home at Broadstairs, where a branch was established in 1875. The establishment is without any endowment, and is entirely dependent on voluntary subscriptions. From time to time the building has been added to and adapted, so that there is little left to tell that it was once an old house. Only the thickness of the walls between the wards and the old-fashioned contrivances of some of the windows betray the fact that the building is not modern. Children are received at any age up to sixteen; some are mere babies. Across Tite Street, exactly opposite, is a building containing six beds for paying patients in connection with the Victoria Hospital.

Paradise Walk, a very dirty, narrow little passage, runs parallel to Tite Street. In it is a theatre built by the poet Shelley, and now closed. At one time private theatricals were held here, but when money was taken at the door, even though it was in behalf of a charity, the performances were suppressed. Paradise Row opens into Dilke Street, behind the pseudo-ancient block of houses on the Embankment. Some of these are extremely fine. Shelley House is said to have been designed by Lady Shelley. Wentworth House is the last before Swan Walk, in which the name of the Swan Tavern is kept alive. This tavern was well known as a resort by all the gay and thoughtless men who visited Chelsea in the seventeenth century. It is mentioned by Pepys and Dibdin, and is described as standing close to the water's edge and having overhanging wooden balconies. In 1715 Thomas Doggett, a comedian, instituted a yearly festival, in which the great feature was a race by watermen on the river from "the old Swan near London Bridge to the White Swan at Chelsea." The prize was a coat, in every pocket of which was a guinea, and also a badge. This race is still rowed annually, Doggett's Coat and Badge being a well-known river institution.

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