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A ROYAL THOROUGHFARE

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purse the heart, too, is lightened and all the scents of Mornay waft us into the oblivion of Fashion. Furs, frocks, jewels and jasmine, linen and lollipops, Burgundy and bulbs, perfume and pets, transformations and transportations, chemists and chemises, antiques and art moderne—from the sublime to the ridiculous—but always, *le dernier cri*. That is the new Regent Street!

It was written of Nash's original thoroughfare (*Quarterly Review 1826*)—*Augustus at Rome was for building renovum'd*
For of marble he left what of brick he had found
But is not our Nash, too, a very great master
He finds London brick and leaves it all plaster.

However his lofty plaster colonnades which formerly decorated the Quadrant (that portion curving gracefully from Piccadilly Circus) were considered by many to be one of the architectural features of the metropolis. For utilitarian purposes they were pulled down in 1848, but the modern architects emulated the idea he had adapted from the brothers Adam and now one of the chief charms of the street is the continuity of façades to emphasize architectural importance. Another is the variety of arcades intersecting the blocks. These form a fascinating series of smart shops. Each window a work of art—each window a glimpse into the smart life of the period—a picture gallery of Fashion 1930 and so reminiscent of that original architect, Nash, whose own abode in Regent Street housed a real picture gallery for the copies of Raphael's paintings which, with the Pope's permission, his artists spent four whole years in painting.

Nearby the old site of his house, stands the splendid British Columbian Government Offices, within view of that magnificent vista of St. James's Park which terminates Lower Regent Street. This is the border of Clubland—the Pall Mall named after the French game with which Charles II amused himself. Appropriately, a well-known sports shop is now close by and across the way the Goupil Gallery where last year Princess Patricia exhibited her clever paintings. By the corner of Jermyn Street—the bachelors' lair—stands the Plaza cinema and then, tuned to the talkies, the roar of Piccadilly Circus falls lightly on the ears, softened by the fragrant baskets of London's flower-girls—although goodness knows they can outdo the talkies in language that is pictorial.

The Piccadilly is still throbbing with music but De Groot's old refrain is only a haunting memory and the new Odddeno's opposite, features the new era which has succeeded the glories of the Café Royale—now, alas, but a name where once wine, women and song did reign.

The clocks of the Goldsmiths and Silvermiths, keeping better company, are still the wise old owls—their funny faces peculiarly expressive amid the inanimate magnificence of gold and silver plate. Canaletto—the Venetian painter—marked his time with hands as accurate when he lived around the corner in 1749 and beyond in Golden Square—now a favorite parking space—Angelica Kauffmann resided within the

precincts of Soho whose Bohemian tastes are vastly similar to then.

Several emporiums of men's fashions, such as Aquascutum and H. J. Nicholl, who also feature feminine attire, stress the distinction of that invisible but profound barrier between the laxity of Soho dress and the standard of the West End. Stalwart and masculine they stand, defying the frivolous bibelots of a peacock-blue shop and the tricky toys cheek by jowl with the naive bloom of Carter's gorgeous bulbs. Quaint little streets dawdling off to Bond Street link the present with the past and near the corner where George Canning lived, Isobel's frocks are so Frenchy as to enchant the great Talleyrand did he now pass to his Embassy in Hanover Square. There St. George's was once the favorite setting for society weddings and its exquisite stained-glass windows made in Malines (about 1520) are colorful inspiration for the modern Tudor building erected by Liberty's from timbers of old men-of-war.

There is something dramatic about the sumptuous colors incorporated into this marvellously accurate reproduction and so we are reminded that in 1790 Mrs. Siddons lived her drama in this vicinity. The beautiful Elizabeth Gunning married a Duke of Argyll—a dukedom in which Canadians are particularly interested—and their residence Argyll House, was at a further corner of Regent Street. Later the Earl of Aberdeen—another name of national interest—bought it, but as it was demolished in 1860, only its dust is incorporated into shops trodden by the eager feet of visitors from Canada where their descendants once governed. I doubt if Dr. Johnson would have scorned to patronize these frivolous shops when buying pretties for his friend, Mrs. Thrale, who lived just about here and another famous personage linking this district with the 18th Century was Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist, who, with a cargo of lava from Iceland, founded the first rock garden of alpine plants in London.

The sparkle of gems and the swish of silken fabrics is the personality of Regent Street, nevertheless once it harbored the ambitions of Carlyle when he brought the manuscript of *Sartor Resartus* to the publishing house of James Fraser—only to have it refused! At first, although accepted later. Now the clang of Oxford Street drowns any bookish tendencies except for the Polytechnic Institute, but Queen's Hall—noted as the home of music—harmoniously leads us to the peace of All Souls Church which Nash built as a focal point to the northern end of Regent Street.

That well-known hotel The Langham would be *non est* now had Nash adhered to his original plan of continuing his thoroughfare into the wide precincts of Portland Place. With this intention he bought *Foley House*—now the site of the Langham Hotel—but selling the property eventually made a sweeping crescent at Langham Place and with this flourish ended Regent Street.

And with this same graceful gesture, the new Regent Street—having triumphantly paraded in a renaissance of beauty dressed in the latest fashion—makes its presentation bow to the foreign embassies and legations that abound in Portland Place.



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