

### "I Was in a Habit Rut."

"I had always used a safety razor. I'd insert a new blade—a good enough first shave; then each shave worse.

"The blade got duller and duller, until in a fret I'd throw it away and insert a new one. A constant annoyance, an expense.

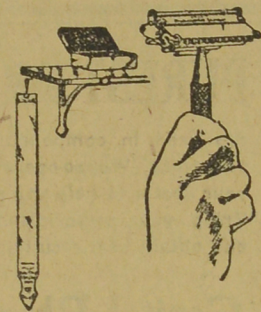
"I thought I'd go through life shaving this way. Ever dissatisfied. I was in a habit rut.

"But now I own a Valet AutoStrop Razor. I sharpen the blade, I shave, I clean the razor, all without removing the blade.

"I'd never go back to the old way."

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Columns today.

## LONDON INTENDS TO BE PLEASURE CAPITAL OF THE WORLD SURPASSING PARIS

**Change is Necessarily Slow But England's Capital City is on the Way—Old Places Vanishing One by One—Cabarets, Restaurants, Dance Places, Skating Rinks, Cafe Chantants and Theatres.**

A vast and glittering city strewn with theatres, cabarets, dance halls, skating rinks, card palaces, cafe chantants, and sprawled over the fashionable shopping district a huge centralized pleasure quarter in which a moneyed crowd bent on pleasure can find every sort and kind of diversion that civilization has devised to date—and that the censor and the police will allow; that is the dream of the pleasure catarrhs in London, writes Peter Forrest in Ideas, London.

And they are busy now making that dream come true. Their ultimate aim is the creation of a pleasure city not only drawing the millions of greater London and the provinces, but alluring masses of the foreign folk who for generations have been spending money like water in the theatres and restaurants, ballrooms, cafes and night haunts of Paris. They know that Paris, the Pleasure City, was not born; it was made and boosted. They see no reason why the new London of today should not outvie the world-famed Gay City if the job is gone about in the right way.

Change is Slow.

Because the changes take place under their noses, the London folk do not realize how fast the pleasure life of the capital, and the very appearance of the pleasure quarter, is changing. They are vaguely aware that dear old places like the Cafe Royal and "Oddy," Verreys and the Cavour—one time rendezvous of Bohemia and the theatrical and sporting worlds—have changed their character and their appearance under the builder's hands; that the theatres put on shows now which are nothing like the shows of the days when Irving reigned at the Lyceum, and Edwardes was king of the Gaiety and Daly's, and the musical comedy girls were queens of the town, that whole streets have been virtually destroyed and rebuilt in queer and unfamiliar ways; that everyone is dancing where no one danced before, and that wherever one goes the feverish music of the jazz age pursues one.

Many new things have come, and many more are coming. Ice skating is going to be the rage a little later on. Experts in the public pleasure taste say that the latter-day vogue of sport will bring ice palaces to the pleasure quarter as surely as the craze for moving to syncopated music brought dance restaurants and clubs.

Hard tennis courts on roofs and underground—they are flood lighted—and roof and indoor golf practice greens and tees, are new departures which are on the increase. They are not for the million, true; but they are great lures for the rich sets who like to mix a little exercise with the hectic pleasures of the day and night.

Theatre Costs Cut.

A decentralization movement is taking the pleasures of the theatre from the high-priced quarter of the West End to the outskirts, to little theatres in Kew, Hampstead, Hammersmith, and to all the big suburbs of the city's fringe. Soon the five or six millions who live around the city's heart will not go into the pleasure quarter for their stage dramas and comedians; they will enjoy them, at a fraction of pleasure quarter prices, in their own neighborhoods.

In the pleasure quarter itself, from Soho to the Strand and Piccadilly to Oxford street, there is a revolution. The great pleasure caterers, who are mainly old men, don't always welcome it.

Charles Pinoli, the oldest and one of the most famous restaurateurs, pioneer of the Soho restaurant, was telling me the other day that he regretted the old days and ways. He knew the London of the 'eighties (he is 75 now), when the Trocadero was the Argyle Rooms, a wild haunt of the young bloods and their ladies of the chorus, and young and lively peeresses went disguised and masked to the rollicking Covent Garden subscription balls—for it was considered as shameful a thing for any respectable woman to go to one of the night life haunts as it was for her to go alone to a restaurant.

In Pinoli's heyday they danced the schottische, the polka, the mazurka, barn dance, tango, new straight waltz and Charleston. And in those days no one dreamed of dancing in a restaurant. The dinner dance and supper dance are post-war things; the tea dance is something even later.

Scores Jazz.

M. Menti, the celebrated restaurateur who runs the Florence and Romano's now—he rose from pantry boy to fame and affluence by reason of his flair for sensing the change taking place in the pleasure life of London twenty and thirty years ago, and the change again which marked the new after-war life, and its quicker beat and demand for new things—described today for me thus: "It is Bedlam. Everyone seems to have gone mad. It is jazz, jazz, jazz all the time. I regret that marvelous race of bon viveurs, connoisseurs, gourmets of before-the-war. It hurts me to see the delicate bloom of a cultivated pleasure life and a refined gastronomy brutally swept away by the saxophone and the cabaret."

"I used to know all my patrons," he told me. "Now any restaurateur is lucky if he knows half by sight. Society has grown to complex—fleeing, elusive, quick-changing. Men and women are in London today, in Paris tomorrow, in New York a week later. Everything has changed. The old London has passed—like that!" And he blew a puff of blue cigar smoke into the air and sadly watched it thin into nothingness.

He had wonderful memories, but nothing more colorful and delightful than memories of Romano's when it was associated with the gay Bohemianism that went with the old Gaiety in the heyday of George Edwardes, Gertie Millar, Connie Smiss, and Lily Elsie. Lordlings, great sportsmen, nobles and Guardes, brought their stage favorites along the Strand to lunch and dine, and King Edward, as Prince of Wales, kept a private room and cutlery there, and frequently came along to entertain his friends. Menti will live to see the new revolution—it will be the third or fourth he has witnessed. What will he think of it—this astute, wise little Italian? It will shock him, for it is going to be an intensification of all that he abhors—more cocktails, more dancing, a speeding up of the whole pleasure life gamut and at the same time everything made shorter and more varied; cabarets preferred to music-halls, people taking snacks rather than meals; very late suppers and 2 A. M. "bites" in vogue; everything quick, intense, vivid, varied, spiced.

When Luigi bought the Embassy from De Courville for £6000, and in eighteen months made it into the most exclusive and celebrated of all the world's night clubs, a haunt known in the smart sets from Rio to New York, from Berlin to Cairo, and from Frisco to Calcutta—he sold it then for £45,000 and retained besides a large interest and managing directorship—the dance craze was at its height.

The Embassy still makes huge profits—it is packed; and this despite the fact that new competitors like the huge Kit-Kat Club, which holds more than most big dance-restaurants, have appeared. But how long it will retain its set no one, not even Luigi, can say. For dance clubs have had their day. All haunts have their day, and pass. None knows that so well as Jack May—May, who has the famous river club at Maidenhead.

Meantime, amid all this turmoil and change, a new and strange phenomenon has arisen which disturbs the pleasure caterers. People are making their own amusement more than even they did before. At a ball, instead of the hired exhibition dancer or cabaret turn, you find an amateur cabaret, amateur dancers as good as professionals. At the Duchess of Sutherland's last bal masque the turn of the evening was provided by an Oxford Eight, of pretty girls, all society amateurs, captained by a well-known young politician. So it goes.

The makers of moving pictures are aware of this new drift, and are making preparation for it—they are intent on producing films which give better "kicks," strong-meat pictures which they would not have dreamed of trying to put over five years ago.

They are building great theatres in London to present them. The old Tivoli music-hall has been a picture house, backed by American money, for some time now. The Plaza is another enormous American-financed house, and recently it was rumored that the Empire, once the heart and centre of music-hall land, is to be rebuilt with American money for the pictures.

The cinema can present something new and alluring once a week. The theatres can't; the cabarets can't—yet. The ballrooms—clubs, dance palaces, dance-restaurants, and all the little

dance salons scattered from end to end of London—are trying to get quick change and variety now, and, after four years of nothing but waltz, fox-trot, and one-step, have suddenly added Charleston and tango to the programme.

Dance experts say that the new pleasure life will probably bring a dance programme of seven or eight dances within two years, and that unless the vast dancing crowd can be given six or seven different sorts of dances, each done to its own characteristic music, in an evening, they will begin to forsake the dance haunts, which will disappear, along with the millions invested in them.

The Albert Hall, the finest building for entertainment purposes in the world, is suffering from the first effects of the pleasure life revolution; and the directors have called in C. B. Cochran—youth, virile, energetic, fertile, successful, adventurous, a big man willing to do big things in a big way—to bring new life and prosperity to the place.

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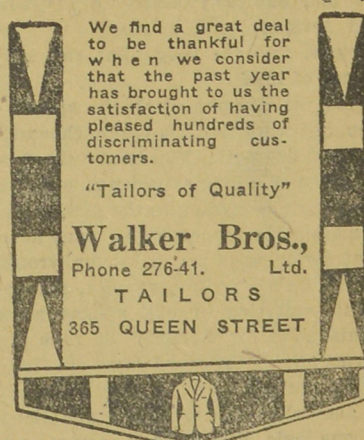
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