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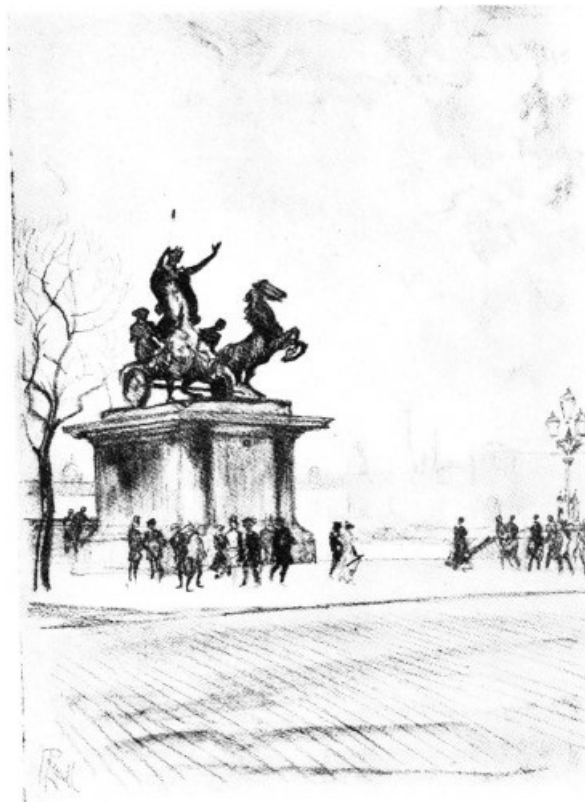
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# A LONDON REVERIE

## I

### BOADICEA, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Thomas Thornycroft's Boadicea adorns the Thames Embankment by Westminster Bridge. About A.D. 60 the widow of Prasutagus, King of the Iceni of East Anglia, rose against the Romans (who had treated her family and people very brutally), took Colchester, London, and St. Albans, and (it is said) put 70,000 Romans to death. Suetonius Paulinus returned from Anglesey and, with a much smaller army than hers, utterly destroyed her forces, after which she killed herself by poison. Her ferocity is not brought out in this calm classical group. Thornycroft took fifteen years to it and the Prince Consort lent him horses as models. It was erected here in 1902.



# **A LONDON REVERIE**

**FIFTY-SIX DRAWINGS**

**BY**

**JOSEPH PENNELL**

**ARRANGED WITH AN  
INTRODUCTORY ESSAY AND NOTES  
BY**

**J. C. SQUIRE**

**THE MACMILLAN COMPANY  
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1937**

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# A LONDON REVERIE

In these drawings of the late Mr. Joseph Pennell's we see the London, or part of the London, of twenty years ago.

That London, structurally, has in large measure disappeared. No doubt the majority of the buildings then standing are still standing. But many of the most central and significant edifices have been pulled down, and very few of the most central and significant thoroughfares have remained unaltered. Regent's Park is still intact, and Kensington Palace Green. Bedford Row, blessed legacy, is unchanged; so, for all I know (or care), is Victoria Street, except for the recent alterations to the Army and Navy Stores. I see no change in Northumberland Avenue; two vile and soulless ranges suitably introduced by the dull Grand Hotel, which stands where Northumberland House once flaunted its lion. But Regent Street, Piccadilly, the Strand, Fleet Street, Oxford Street, Piccadilly Circus, Oxford Circus, have all been substantially modified, some for the worse, some for the better. Waterloo Bridge, centre of the finest vista in London, is on crutches and possibly doomed. Devonshire House, not externally a beautiful building, but quiet, homely, surrounded by gravelled space, and guarded by the finest pieces of weathered Portland stone extant, fell yesterday. It gave place to a building which might have been the legitimate glory of Dayton, Ohio, or Memphis, Tennessee. Yesterday, also, fell Grosvenor House, a rather ugly building, apart from its screen on the side street, but one not dwarfing the lovely little balconied and bow-fronted Regency rows which made Park Lane (the rich in smallish houses, aristocracy temperately putting on a show of domesticity over the trees and the pastoral expanse) the pleasantest thing in London, for all the roar of buses under its windows. A great squat block of flats has gone up in its place, with a touch of good taste and restraint about it which only makes its offence more noticeable. "Wail, Park Lane: Wail, Mount Street," as William Blake might have said in one of his Prophetic Books. The transformation, though still local, is as noticeable as a gap in a man's front teeth. There are no great monuments of architecture in Park Lane, and no buildings so sacred because of their associations that people will feel obliged to agitate for their preservation. It was merely a pleasant back-scene over the Park, with an atmosphere of *rus in urbe* and *urbs in rure*. Its integrity has gone; a building has been erected which stands amid the others like Gulliver among the Lilliputians; there is no longer any proportion there and the rest may as well be destroyed. An agreeable rank of private houses will have disappeared, which gave a sense of privacy to the loafers in the Park as well as to the Croesuses who inhabited them; instead we shall have a pile of expensive blocks of flats, ephemerally tenanted by "the Argentine, the Portugee, and the Greek", which may be frigidly dignified but will have little that is peculiarly Londonish about them. The old Park Lane could never have existed in any other city than London, though its less impressive kinsmen might be found in corners of Brighton or Cheltenham. The new, at best, will merely be a discreet version of Park Avenue, New York, a slightly more Anglo-Saxon sister of streets in the neighbourhood of the Bois de Boulogne, a rather less blatant analogue to the grandest boulevards of Charlottenburg. Park Lane is in process of evanishment; and at this moment of writing the old walls of the Bank of England are falling in clouds of dust. The old Empire Theatre (which was certainly ugly, but was unpretentious and of its epoch) has gone, whilst the disconsolate statue of Shakespeare broods over the vacancy; and Exeter Hall, preserved in Pennell's line, has also gone. Architectural treasures these certainly were not, and each of them had unpleasing associations, though of widely differing kinds; but the brave show each tried to make was of a kind that must now appear to us pathetically modest: they were immolated, as much more will be immolated, on the altar of the Big, the Broad, and the Cosmopolitan.

Many of Pennell's drawings are records of streets and edifices that no longer exist. Not only the physical appearance has passed. Twenty years in any era will bring a change: these twenty years, owing to the interposition of the War, have brought a greater change than most. This was the pre-War world. Examine Pennell's pictures, and you will find not merely buildings that have disappeared, but modes of costume and transport which have gone, never to return.

It is the world of the early nineteen-hundreds. It is a time before the jolly vulgarity of Earl's Court had leap-frogged westward to the White City, and then to Wembley, now in its turn deserted. I cannot fix the exact year (if the drawings do all date from any one year), because I never can recall the precise dates and sequences of women's sleeves and hats. There was (but this was certainly much earlier) the leg-of-mutton sleeve, the most repulsive and abnormal distortion to which the slaves of fashion had subjected themselves since the days of Queen Elizabeth, wiggish extravagances being excepted. There were the sleeves that had a hunch above the shoulders, the sleeves that ballooned below the shoulder and were then tight, the sleeves that were tight all the way down until they came to a widening at the wrist. Skirts were always long, and had to be held up, gracefully or awkwardly; hats were usually large, either towering like wedding-cakes or undulant and plummy like the hat of Gainsborough's Duchess. In the country, yokels were still sitting on the

benches outside village inns and drinking the healths of General French and (in the West of England) General Buller. In London, dominated by the bonhomie of Le Roi Édouard VII, the Man about Town, silk-hatted, full-moustached, gardenia'd, still decorated Pall Mall; and the "Johnny", whose popular name was also "Algy", leant, fair-haired, high-foreheaded, aquiline, monocled, spruce, on the Criterion bar, or took the chorus out to supper. The traffic, commerce apart, consisted of horse-buses—the Monster, the Royal Blue, the Fulham White, and so on—and jingling leisurely hansoms. A dozen or so of these still remain amongst us, almost as odd as sedan-chairs. Now and then some sentimentalist, having a quarter of an hour free, will take one of them, and recover, with a twinge of the heart, the sensations of his youth. In those days, beyond all things, they were fleet. There were the buses; there were the four-wheelers; but the hansoms were the Atalantas. These poor jog-trotting survivals (as we think them) seemed then to be prodigies of perfect springing, elimination of friction, balance, comfort, and speed. We had hardly started (the horse's feet clumping merrily, the wood-and-glass apron-doors shut cosily, the body jiggling with the resilience of an air-cushion, the bells ringing), than we drew up before the dim-lit portico, sprang out to assist our whitely voluminous lady to alight, rang a bell or watched a latch-key turning, shook a reluctant parting hand, heard a door bang, and trotted off again into the empty dim-lit streets. A hansom now! I take one sometimes; I wonder if any of my readers do! It is thrilling to get in, thrilling to jog alone with the horse's back and ears in front, and the animal steam rising; thrilling to hear the jingle, the creak of harness, to see the shafts wobbling in the harness, to be aware of that tough old man on the box behind and above the dark compartment, who suddenly will slacken his horse's pace, lift the little high shutter, and ask for a specific direction. But what crawling, what miscalculation of times! Everything passes us, our lamps are faint to the point of exhaustion, our driver is a withered survival; the jolting is fatiguing. All is tolerable merely as an anachronism that stimulates the memory.

The motor-car, though rare, existed; there were even motor-buses; "the Arrow", "the Pioneer", and such, which frequently broke down and left their passengers in the lurch, thereby indicating that the new age, which was trying to arrive, had not yet arrived. Otherwise means of transport were still Victorian, Dickensian even. And the social and political structure were survivals also. In the year 1900 there was a great discussion as to whether the nineteenth century had begun in that year or was to begin in the next; the Kaiser, who was incapable of understanding that there never had been a year 0, characteristically pronouncing in favour of 1900. In point of fact the twentieth century began in 1914, if we are to consider centuries as eras. Much, no doubt, had gone which had been in evidence during Victoria's prime. Dukes no longer wore their garters, nor rustics their smocks; hatchments were no longer displayed outside houses of death, though tan was still laid outside houses of sickness, and hearses were still cornered by the panoply of plumes. Yet every line regiment had its scarlet uniform and peculiar facings. The King's cousins were still encumbered by German names, Schleswig-Holstein, Battenberg, and Teck; and they seemed very thick on the ground.

In 1905 Mr. Balfour was Prime Minister; Mr. George Wyndham, young and handsome, was getting into trouble about Ireland; Mr. Alfred Lyttelton, not long since an England cricketer, was in trouble about Chinese indentured labour meant to work the mines in the newly conquered Transvaal, the Union of South Africa and the Dutchmen's Revenge not having been dreamt of. The social and imperial organisations which Disraeli had known were still intact. The debates of the House of Lords were still followed with close interest, not to mention those of the House of Commons. A Peer might be Prime Minister; Lord Salisbury had only recently left office. None of the Victorian political threads had yet been followed to the middle of the maze. The destruction, by taxation, of the squirearchy had been merely begun; Home Rule was still being argued in relation to the incidence of taxation and the precise numbers of Murphys and O'Connors who were to represent Cork and Limerick at Westminster; the Welsh were agitating for Disestablishment; a small minority of the adult population was on the electoral roll; the "latch-key" voter was an object of keen controversy; and the women, content with the prospect of a municipal vote as widow-house-holders, had not begun that campaign of burning, whipping, and picture-slashing which was finally to prove to both front benches their eligibility for the franchise. The Coaching Club was going strong; no American had as yet successfully invaded Wimbledon; the ragged and bare-footed urchins of Barnardo's advertisements still infested the doorsteps of the slums.

Thus, apparently, it was going on "from precedent to precedent". Ireland would always be a source of trouble, but it was an agreeable place to hunt in. Babus would get ideas into their heads, but the Mutiny had taught its lesson and the redcoats had the situation well in hand, except for the perennial sharp-shooting on the North-West Frontier. A clever public-school boy could not do much better than enter the Indian Civil Service at the age of twenty-three, govern half a kingdom, and retire, still young, with a pension of a thousand a year, which in those days, and with those prices and taxes, meant luxury. We had had trouble with the French at Fashoda, but Édouard le Bien-Aimé was the adored of the boulevards, and all was well. The Russians had been momentarily dangerous, but the young Czar had shown idealism

with his peace-rescript, he might be trusted gradually to liberalise the country (undeterred by the bombs of the Nihilists), and the cut of his features and of his beard made him extraordinarily like the Prince of Wales. Russia was well on the way to taking its full share in the civilisation of Western Europe, backward though the moujiks undoubtedly were. The volatile German Emperor, with his flashing eyes and upturned moustaches, was doubtless magniloquent and bombastic, and did talk a little too much about his new toy, the German Navy, a thing that Germany could not possibly need; yet he always appeared, and friendlily smiled, on occasions of family grief or rejoicing, a gallant figure on his proud charger, in processions. Change was ahead of us. The aged and side-whiskered Franz Josef must some day die, and then “the Break-up of the Dual Monarchy” would, in some mysterious but innocuous way, take place. The Sick Man of Europe was also indeterminately doomed. China, too, might break up. But all was for the best; the clouds were no bigger than a man's hand; never did we think of aeroplanes over cities, tanks, poison-gas, thousands of miles of trenches, four years of war, many millions of dead, the crashings of thrones, the obliteration of the old map of Europe. It was the calm before the storm; and its storms were storms in a teacup of Wedgwood. There was no international menace that might not be removed by a Lord Mayor's banquet preceded by a blaring procession to the Guildhall—the Czar, the Kaiser, the French President, the Shah of Persia, the King of Siam, they were all one to the cheerful cockney populace, and were all heartily cheered.

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London was then, as it is now, unique among capitals: concentrating so many functions, being the seat of so many activities. It is the seat of the Court and of the Government and Parliament; it is the unchallengeable centre of social life; it is the headquarters of all the learned professions; it is an immense manufacturing society; it is the financial centre of the Empire; it is Britain's greatest port. A man may possibly regret the agglomeration of so many energies and so many populations. In Germany the old capitals still retain some importance; the publishers, for example, of Munich vie with those of Berlin. Paris is not a port, and New York is not the seat of Government; Edinburgh and Glasgow have separate characters. A pity, it may arguably be, that the Kings of England and their Parliaments did not choose to remain at Oxford or Winchester or even Reading, relieving London of part of its present congestion. There are those who hate all cities so large that an hour's walk cannot bring you to the edge of them. Cobbett, who invariably called London “the Wen”, was one of them: he believed in grass, corn, oats, fresh air, and enlightened feudalism. William Morris was another. He wrote:

Forget six counties overhung with smoke,  
Forget the snorting steam and piston-stroke,  
And dream of London, small and white and clean,  
The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green....

These men were sorry for what had happened; yet were they also sorry that it had happened to London. Mr. Chesterton once said that the statement “my aunt has tremendously changed” was a positive affirmation that she was still “my aunt”. “Dream of London,” Morris still had to say when he was thinking of abolishing modern London; and Cobbett, for all his hatred of the creeping scrofula of the houses on the outskirts, would, if pressed, (like the patriot and poet that he was) have made many exceptions in favour of institutions and buildings that he knew. He may have seen (if they were there in his day) the shining and stalwart sentries on their black steeds outside the Horse Guards; he may have leisurely floated down the Thames for a fish-dinner at the Ship, Greenwich. No man who has once lived in London, wandered about it, examined its nooks and crannies, entered into its variegated and richly traditional life, could honestly say that he wished it all wiped out, even if he shared Cobbett's and Morris's views about industrialism, paper money, and the decay of rural England. There would be many things that he could not bear to destroy. And for every man there would be different things; the place, the city, the congeries of history being so vast.

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How vast it is! I, who have lived in London for twenty years and constantly explored it out of curiosity, suddenly check myself and realise what great lacunae there are in my knowledge of it. My map of London contains as many blank spaces as did the map of Africa in Mungo Park's day. It is perfectly true that I know the centre of London (though there are still streets between Piccadilly and Oxford Street into which I have strayed once or never at all, and which may contain the oddest and most charming unknown things), and that I have visited most of the hidden Churches of the City. It is true that the East Central district has few secrets which I do not share: that I know the Adelphi Arches, that I have

paused in Neville's Court hundreds of times, that I have visited the Roman Bath off the Strand, that I have lunched at the George and Vulture, and penetrated the Crypt of St. Mary-le-Bow. It is true that I know Chelsea, Kensington, Hammersmith, Chiswick, and Kew on the west, and have explored the environs of Gunnersbury Park. It is true that I have taken my pleasure in the Georgian fronts of the North Side, Clapham Common, and of Church Row, Hampstead; that I have walked through the Blackwall Tunnel and slept in a slum in Walworth. I know Southwark Cathedral and the lovely inn-yard which adjoins it; the Inns of Court, every court of every inn; the library of St. Paul's, the cellars of the Bank, most of the panelled rooms and Samuel Scotts of the City Companies I have been in Barking Church and Tottenham Churchyard; I am familiar with Gilbert Scott's magnificent new church at Northfleet, and with Rahere's; with the Minories, the environs of the Tower, the whole length of Little Thames Street, and more than one old riverside public-house at Wapping. I have watched the deer cantering at Richmond, and the masts spiring over the houses on both banks of the River in the East. I am acquainted with Dirty Dick's, the Hole in the Wall, the Soane Museum, the Dulwich Gallery, Browning Hall, and Ruskin Park; with the new road to Sidcup and the new cut to Esher; and with most of the main roads by which a motor-car can pass out of London into England, wild nature, and the established past. Yet, if I look at a map, I find myself immediately confronted with wide districts of which I know only the names, and perhaps a few historical associations. Edmonton and Ware: they occur in *John Gilpin*, and they have apparently grown enormously; what remains of antiquity there may be in them, what relics of Gilpin's and Cowper's day, what new creations of modern art, what passions of local patriotism, I know not, nor even, very accurately, where these places are. "Walthamstow" and "Ilford": on Election nights I have waited long to see the figures for these celebrated boroughs of outer London thrown upon the screen, and have cheered or groaned according to the results; but as to their configuration I know no more than Sir Thomas Browne knew about the songs the Sirens sang, and the name that Achilles took when he was in Scyros, among the women. Willesden Junction I know, but not Willesden; Brondesbury as a station on the railway, but not as the possible site for a story by Mr. Chesterton; of Highgate I can only recall the Church Spire, the Archway, the Archway Tavern, and a neighbouring bookshop; of Hackney I know nothing; and there, to the North-East and South-East, my imagination travels into regions of which I can "picture" only small isolated spots. With at least half London I am totally unacquainted; and I am not less curious than most.

Every Londoner-born, every provincial who comes to live in London, has his own London. For no two individuals, probably, is this unconscious selection the same: there is a London for every man in London. London is almost "as large as life". There are probably tens of thousands of Jews in Whitechapel who have never seen, or even heard of, Portland Place; there are certainly many people in Portland Place who have vaguely heard of Whitechapel, but only as an outlying territory, like the Andamans or the Solomon Islands, which has to be administered, and may, at any moment, be liable to give trouble. There is a London of the unthinking Rich: bounded on the east by the Savoy and on the west by Kensington High Street. There is a London of the Colonial, a congeries of great hotels and famous "sights". There is a London of the stupid American, and a London of the cultivated American, who goes far and wide in search of a background with which his own country does not yet provide him. There is a London of the Chelseaite and the Bloomsburyite; there is a London, frequented and beloved by Mr. W. W. Jacobs and Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, and intimately known by Conrad, which begins at Tower Hill and goes eastwards; a marine London, a London of docks, and spars, returned and battered ships, crimps and Chinamen, merchandise and anecdotes from the Seven Seas, tea-chests, bales and anchors, the smells of salt, tar, bilge-water, and river-mud. A man knows and loves Acton, but hardly knows where Tottenham is; a man regards Streatham as the secondary centre of the universe, the City being its only superior; a man lives in Tooting, and finds it difficult to believe that Finchley, with its glitter of trams and shops, exists. Yet for all of them, however widely London may spread, however discrete its parts may become, there is a general awareness of London, and there is a central and nodal part of London which they regard as common property, symptomatic and symbolical of the whole chaotic and magnificent business. In exile they feel it acutely. Wherever the Londoner abroad comes from, it isn't the Balham Town Hall or the Forest Hill Waterworks that most arouses his emotion. After the Union Jack it is Trafalgar Square, or Piccadilly, or St. Paul's. It is even possible to imagine a group of British exiles, in the middle of the Gobi Desert, giving (were a sudden picture or wireless message to be encountered) three cheers for the British Museum. London is a hotch-potch, but it still has a heart and a soul. Even the most sprawling octopus has organs.

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They very seldom pull down anything ugly in London. When they do, as in the Strand, old shoddy is usually replaced by new. Yet, whatever disappears, men will, as time goes by, regret it; and what had not even the humblest grace of form will take in memory a presence, a bloom, a luminosity from that vanished youth with which it was associated. There are men of my generation who, at this moment, when that flimsy and dingy little restaurant of Appenrod's is being

demolished, will merely remark that it is an ugly obstruction and ought to go in the interests both of traffic and the eye; yet who, when it has gone, will feel, if it be casually mentioned, the pang it cannot give them now. Life is a tissue of farewells, and every change is a reminder of it; but here, in the death of such a building, is a symbol of a death which even in life we have experienced, our own death which we have survived, the death of our youth. Before the century is out there will be greybeards to whom the Bush Building will be a part of the old London they first knew—what the County Fire Office, with its arcade and its Britannia, was to us. To-day it is too new to have become firmly part of anyone's fabric of retrospect. Its site for some is haunted by the phantom of an old maze of streets, Holywell Street and Booksellers' Row, streets dark with the shadows of seventeenth-century gables and littered with books, fruit, and "old junk". To others that great white rectilinear block stands upon an empty triangle of waste, where for years no foot trod behind the palings, and the rubble-covered earth was clothed with sparse grass, and then, invisible seeds coming one by one on the invisible wind, a tangle of vagrant weeds grew there, a garden for untidy Nature in the heart of the smoke and the bricks, *Flora Londiniensis* reconstituted—fifty sorts of flowers, with pink swathes of the rose-bay willow-herb spiring over all. Demolitions and "improvements" are incessant in London. Every hour old beams, newly naked to the sky, are battered down in pathetic ruin, a fresh gap is opened in one of our ten thousand streets, foundations are dug, bricks laid, new signs stuck up. Every year the fringes of London extend: what was a placid country house yesterday is a grimy building plot to-day. London is in perpetual flux. Yet, in retrospect, it is not a shifting background one sees, but a fixed one, mysteriously arrested at some moment and seeming to have been immutable for years: a picture which, for all one knows, may include things which actually were not co-existent in time, one façade falling before another was built.

This London that has gone, though relics of it surround us on every side, saw our youth and was a part of our youth, our youth that is a country which is lost. There are other provinces, and for no two persons is that whole country the same. For me, inhabited for an epoch of childhood, there were blue seas, shell-covered beaches, fishermen's churches at evenfall with the wind howling outside, and "Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow" filling the nave bright with hanging oil-lamps—the streets of a garrison town with every other promenader a blue-jacket or a soldier in scarlet with a swagger cane—farms, weather-slatted, with little front gardens full of canterbury-bells, sweet-williams, stocks, with flat-faced flame-petalled sunflowers guarding the wall, and borders edged with low box, or button-daisies, or the blue of arabis and the yellow of calceolaria, and orchards behind, where gnarled grey trunks stood in long grass—wet boulder-scattered slopes of sunlit Dartmoor, the crested tors standing silently round, and two boys with small rods mounting past patches of heather, tufted rushes, and whortle-berry clumps with their purple bloom-pallid berries hidden under bushy leaves, from pool to pool of a streamlet's noisy descent, crouching with thrilled hearts to entice the trout, trout that were so brown-bright, so spotted, and flapped so noisily in the basket when they ought to have been dead. How ample a province! What market squares full of gaitered farmers, traps, and cattle! what thatched and pink-washed cottages! what cobbled streets straggling down to little harbours where the fishing-boats were beached and the quays stank at low tide of fish and marine slime, and the mud was strewn with half-buried tins, crockery, chains, and rusty flukes of forgotten anchors! What drives at night between hedges, with the horse's feet clopping and rings of light from the square-lamps hovering along the broken gathering darkness at each side! Days—no, not days, for the divisions of days are forgotten—of climbing, sailing, swimming, picnicking, games in empty houses, or candles and books in bed at night, the creak of footsteps on the stairs. A great organ, like a painted Giant's Causeway, thundering in the Guildhall, while the massed choir (ladies all in white, sopranos with red sashes, contraltos with blue) sang choruses of the *Messiah*. Racks in railway carriages and the notices under them, "Five Seats" laboriously altered by a wag into "Five Cats". The Salvation Army bands lugubriously braying in the empty streets, or suddenly encountered, marching, with a rabble behind them, round a corner. Dim Queen Victoria's first Jubilee and the unveiling of a monument; a golden tip from a strange gentleman whose head was high out of sight. A wain of red clover in the dusk of an archway; runnels of water threading the star-patterns on the yellow bricks of a stable-yard; horses in loose boxes; a dog that lost its puppies; a water-ford with the wheels axle-deep; the ragged pinnacle of a ruined castle emerging from steep woods; air-gun practice in a shed; a warm chaffinch, stone-dead, its ruddy breast so smooth, its white-barred wings lifted to find the bloody hole; a stab of remorse. A heavy dirty-jacketed rook, dead in a furrow, dingy black, maggotty when it was turned. Daisy chains, ripe apples from the tree, bird's-foot trefoil (that is a lotus), wet red moss-rose. Scented coffee grinding in one window, waxen barbers' busts in the next, the beauty of an ironmonger's and a corn-chandler's, the little sailor-suited figures in a tailor's window, cheese, oranges, the desiccated rings of grocer's apples. Thus will the endless chain of association draw bright images from that inexhaustible well.

Then older days at school, and an imperceptible frontier had been crossed, never to be traversed again. At a certain time childhood was behind and we were ashamed of ever having been children, unlearned, undisciplined simpletons, silly little fools and asses. To evade the opprobrium we put the past out of mind, and, if it had to be recalled,



exaggerated a few years into "long ago". It seemed long ago perhaps, for time moved so slowly then; and it was truly "far away", if not "long ago"; for the first sharpness of impression had gone, the senses had reaped their main harvest and had but gleaning to do thenceforth, and the dawn of generalisation had set in, though information about the world and other men's notions was very scanty. Childhood had given place to first youth; we had learned to curb our suffering; but no shock-absorber, alas, was needed to mitigate the force of the assaults of beauty and of fact. It was in childhood that we apprehended, with awed delight, the heavenly bodies, the seasons and weather, earth, sea and sky, the kinds of people and of animals, flowers and trees, and received most sharply the treasures of sight, sound, scent, taste, and touch. Mr. W. H. Davies has written:

I saw this day sweet flowers grow thick—  
But not one like the child did pick.

A hundred butterflies saw I—  
But not one like the child saw fly.

I saw the horses roll in grass—  
But no horse like the child saw pass.

My world this day has lovely been—  
But not like what the child has seen.

That is not sentimentality: it is truth. Every category of impressions came to us in childhood with a vividness and poignancy not to be recovered: the new sensations of later life are but pale supplements and extensions of these, and our mere memories of these are stronger than anything we can receive from the actual presence of their successors. We may "admire" and be touched to melancholy or reverence by a sunset, gorgeous or soft; but our feelings are but faint reflections of those which we experienced when the first great sunsets were unfolded for our virgin souls. It was then that we learnt the solitude of the hills and the sweet companionship of the rivers, the wonder of wide primroses in the woods and hard blackberries in the brakes, looked first at trout lying in a bridge's shadow, drank through our nostrils the strange empty savour of river water as we swam. It was then that with intensest pleasure we watched the rooster crow from his dunghill, fed from our fingers the sucking calf, patted the bristly hide of the lazy sow. It was then that we learnt how hot the sun can bake great stones by the sea, and how rapidly on such hot stones the wet stamp of a bathing dress will dry; that we tasted with an irrecoverable sharpness the aromatic mustard of nasturtium seeds, and felt the strong, tight, flexible armour of the seeds of the sunflower; saw glow-worms, green glimmers in June's dark scented lanes; drank in the intense blue of the thrush's eggs, the pure white of the pigeon's, the stippled rusty streaks of the robin's, the fragility of broken shells on the ground, the gape of small birds' beaks in the nest; were awed by the sounds, at night, of the breaking sea and the wailing wind, the waving trees and the tu-whooping owls; listened, with acutest ears, in autumn twilights, to church bells miles away, now loud, now almost inaudible, and heard only the chime, never thinking of ringers or belfry; and on a night of fire, saw vast puffs of sparks, yellow and red, drift across dark-blue sky with a delight we had known also when the last golden husk had slid back and revealed, seated high, dazzling, with a star-pointed sceptre, the fairy at the heart of a Transformation Scene.

That capacity for complete reception, complete delight, complete self-forgetfulness, departed with childhood; later youth, at school and at Cambridge, brought its treasures of scene and society; and, for me, at least, London does not enter into that part of the tapestry where youth was passing through its second transition, dipping at random into the various worlds of books, aware for the first time of the rumour of conflicting ideas, newly acquainted with the names of the great ones of the world, serenely supercilious about them, but undeniably shy when any of them physically appeared. To others, born and bred in London, the place must mean things it can never mean to me. My own first sight of it was when I was eighteen, steaming eternally into Paddington on a cold, damp, gloomy December day, with something like terror closing in on me at the magnitude of the thing and its legend—a feeling that always returns when there comes to my nostrils the sharp coppery reek of a great railway terminus. That terror no man or woman bred in London can have known. As we sped in through the ever-increasing density, until we slowed down under the smoke-blackened cliffs outside the great cavern of Paddington, my heart stood still and I trembled. I tried to laugh at myself and could not; and dismounted with awe. The horror wore off: the unfamiliarity remained, all the time I was at Cambridge and for two years after. There were occasional week-ends and three or four weeks. I knew the environs of St. Pancras and Queen's Club (staying in a lodging near this last, and a boarding-house, full of young Indians and indeterminate elderly ladies, in

Woburn Place?—Square?—Terrace?), and a few houses in the West of London and the suburbs. The City I knew but as something strange, almost mythical, full of narrow streets, traffic, classic porticoes, and unexpected sooty churches, that one passed through on the way to Liverpool Street. When, in search of some friend, I took a hansom to Kensington or, with very strict attention to my instructions about trains, went out to sup near Clapham Common or the Crystal Palace, I knew no more about the wildernesses of houses I travelled through or over than I do now about the dismal wastes of Chicago. Once or twice I passed the Abbey on buses and disliked the towers; occasionally I passed St. Paul's and wondered if I should ever climb the Dome for the view. I did not know the names of most of the buildings I saw: the streets, except for Piccadilly, the Strand, and a few more, were all one. In my first year at Cambridge I even had the idea that New Oxford Street and Holborn were of a peculiarly metropolitan importance. London, shorn of its original awe, was a shapeless and featureless thing of unknown size, a body without a soul, that meant nothing to me. On occasional visits one might travel to Queen's Club for the Rugby match and spend the evening with haphazard undergraduates drinking new liqueurs in foreign restaurants; or go to the theatre; gradually increasing ones knowledge of the stations on the Inner Circle, and learning to distinguish between Hyde Park Corner and Marble Arch. But London as a whole was as yet virgin of associations, either personal or historical. I shall never forget, but can never clearly remember, the first true inkling I had of its size. In 1907 I walked from Devonshire to London, taking a holiday from employment on a local newspaper, in the guise of a penniless tramp, sleeping in haystacks (a rat ran across my face in the dark), pheasant-copses (the rain dripping all night, the pheasants chuckling), and Casual Wards. I broke the journey at Oxford, shaved and borrowed clothes, spent several agreeable days, punted on the Cher, talked to a Rhodes scholar about Petronius, played a good deal of billiards, first encountered Father Ronald Knox in his infant glory and a red tie, acquired the fare to Reading, and, resuming the bedraggled mackintosh and the tieless collar, left the disgusted porter of Balliol behind me.

One night I slept in Balliol College, the next in Isleworth Casual Ward: I take it, an unusual collocation. I had walked from Maidenhead to Isleworth on a damp Saturday afternoon in May, and reached the workhouse when the lights were already being lit. My pockets were turned out according to the usual ritual; I informed the grim official in charge that I was a "clurk", and I waited my turn for the bath. Whilst I was undressing a tough customer with cunning eyes, a red nose, a black moustache, and a bristly chin, asked me if I had surrendered any money. "A few pence," I said. "You done wrong," he replied, "you should a' left it in the 'edge outside." The official, when I stepped into the bath, stood over me with a long-handled brush with bristles like stiff twigs. Observing that I did not need it he demurred; and, realising that I could not be a professional, he gave me a few words of advice about not arriving at Casual Wards so late in the evening. I slept with difficulty on a thin blanket laid over large unresisting diamonds of wire that left red patterns on my thighs and back. The morning, as I had carefully arranged, was Sunday morning. No stone-breaking on Sundays: I was released early, after a plate of thin porridge, with a hunk of stale bread, that I ate as I walked down the street. And I tramped from there to Chelsea, where my best friend was to be found.

What a walk for an unaccustomed man not versed in the past of all those neighbourhoods: Isleworth, the fringe of Hounslow, Brentford, Chiswick, Hammersmith, Fulham, the King's Road! "Wens that Cobbett never knew": an unmitigated ugliness it seemed: hideous shops, factories, gin-palaces, in endless succession, with here and there a gas-works, a railway station, or a Victorian Gothic church or chapel to relieve the misery with a change of misery; trams and buses all along the interminable miles, and the pavements crowded with shabby townees in their Sunday best. Size, squalor, lack of purpose, were the dominant impressions on one new to it all. Not one thing interested me the whole way: the dirt was too noticeable; it was all dirt.

Were I to take that journey again to-day it would be all different, though the tentacles of the Devouring Town have stretched out even farther than they had twenty years ago. Then the London suburbs were mere names to me: I knew nothing of their past nor of their relative positions; nor did I know what delights may in any of them be lurking round the next corner. All those miles, in worn boots with a greasy handkerchief still round a blistered heel, did I trudge, not for a moment even aware that the Thames was half the time within easy reach, and that the banks of the Thames were strewn with the charming relics of rural civilisation. So depressed was I with the featurelessness of the new that I never noticed the presence of the old, seeing only the great gold and black fascias, the projected one-story shops, the blackened front gardens, the groaning, creaking trams, the congested cross-roads, the wretched hordes of people, and saying to myself, "No wonder Gissing wrote as he did!" Yet, if I took that walk now, every quarter of a mile would show me "objects of interest", and any street-name or inn-sign might start a train of thought. The Kraken, modern London, devours and devours, yet the hard skulls and timbers of its prey remain intact within its capacious folds. An inn may even be vilely rebuilt in Brewers' Olde Englysshe or Twentieth Century Transition, but its name will remain; such a name as "The

Packhorse and Talbot” in Chiswick High Road, which summons the imagination at once to a mediaeval mode of transport, a mediaeval sporting dog, and a mediaeval hero. As I went through Brentford I might have thought of its antiquity, its two Kings, the Elizabethan playwrights who used to gather at the Pigeons, the merry jests of George Peele. Whether I knew of these things I cannot now say; but I do know that I did not then connect them with what I saw. I passed the gate of Syon House and knew nothing of it; the approach to Kew Bridge and was unaware of it, of the great domesticated landscape on the other side, the palm house, the orangery, Sir William Chambers's pagoda; Kew Gardens then were to me a name without a local habitation, and no memory of their lilacs perfumed the neighbourhoods around them. Just behind the squalid respectabilities of Gunnersbury lay intact the riverside village street of Strand-on-the-Green, fine Augustan mansions, tumble-down cottages, ancient pubs with little balconies overlooking the brown tides of the Thames and the sleeping hulls of fishing-boats which, within living memory, had sailed from here to the Nore, past all the traffic and history of London, on their proper business. Rousseau had lived down one turning in Chiswick; down another I might have come upon the lion-guarded gate of the high-walled park where still stands the classic mansion which Burlington built and in which Fox died; and another, if I chance to see it to-day, calls me to Hogarth's house, to an inn—closed the other day by the brewers—almost as old as Agincourt, to old Chiswick Church and the graveyard where Louthembourg lies underneath the most perfectly orotund of inscriptions, to the ferry where old wrinkled Fishlock recalled the Crimea in August 1914, to the little Mall dock where the red-sailed barges lie moored in peaceful twilights, to a great tree over the pavement, to river-gardens and a cuckoo heard in one, to a company of old houses, a row of poplars, a flour-covered bakery with a quay, an old blind lady in a trim little house, full of mahogany, china, antimacassars and carpets, children playing on bicycles, a swan sitting in the osier bed of the Eyot, a dead friend, twelve years of my own life. The poplars one year were pollarded, and for days two crows, which had always nested in them, flew bewildered round the ghost of its crown, in search of what was gone for ever.

Of what was, and what was to be, on that drab distant Sunday, I was utterly unaware, seeing only the streets, trams and people, not knowing when I crossed the frontiers of all these indistinguishable boroughs, insensitive to the remains of the villages they had been, or any painful modern efforts to recover for them something of individuality and give them new centres and a touch of new dignity. There is a dream behind Hammersmith Town Hall, and an aspiration in the Secondary School behind Duke's Meadows. Utterly unaware, I was plodding mechanically onward, asking always the way to King's Road, near the end of which was a shabby square I had once visited. A few days followed. We went to a meeting at which there spoke, with a fine sweeping certainty about all things, a younger Bernard Shaw with a redder beard. We sat on twopenny seats over the Serpentine while night came over and the long reflections of the lamps brightened on the water. I saw several extraordinary little men in buildings off Fleet Street who were unable to suggest to me even the smallest job at the lowest salary. I took, with an attempt at hope, a letter of introduction to H. W. Massingham from an old friend, who had not seen him for years, but had often bicycled with him in Battersea Park in a past age when that exercise, in that curious place, was fashionable. He asked me what I was prepared to write about. “Almost anything,” I answered, “but especially poetry.” His lizard's eyes blinked behind his shining glasses. “They all say that,” he said. They do.

The wrinkled nutcracker smile was not unkindly, but there was no promise in it. He saw young aspirants every day, no doubt. Years later we became acquainted and he evidently did not remember me; nor did I ever tell him that for a day I had pinned my last hopes on him. He was a jaundiced politician, and had no understanding of men; but generous of soul and attractive when you were with him. I last met him by accident, one sunny morning in August 1924, on the step of the Pilgrims' Inn at Glastonbury. We talked for five minutes and went off in our respective cars: he to Cornwall, where, within a week or so, he suddenly died.

The office doors of the *Nation*, the halfpenny dailies, and *Pearson's Weekly*—where I only just missed thirty shillings a week as a judge of Limerick competitions—closed behind me. London would not be even a “stony-hearted mother” to me, and I must creep back to my province. I worked off the spleen by walking from London, through Winchester to Salisbury, in just over forty-eight hours. Chelsea at two; Guildford—with the gas-lamps shining melancholy on laurels outside—at half-past ten. Then, by error in the dark, Godalming; then Farnham; Alton in the early morning, with a small hot brown loaf from a baker's just opened. Two nights out, sleeping rough by snatches, heaven knows where. I had never seen that road before, and now I know every turn on it. A train from Salisbury and I was back at my *point d'appui*.

It wasn't entirely solitary. There were good men on that struggling newspaper; and I had a few friends in the town, as well as others, in Cambridge, in London, and wandering with the wind, who sent me news of the progress of the Union,

of international comity, of the young Crichtons of my time, of literary life in Copenhagen, hotels in Florence, missions in India, and football in Singapore. I played occasionally for scratch rugger teams, and watched a good deal of football on Saturday afternoons. I heard Madame Patti, gloriously manipulating a cracked voice, sing "Home Sweet Home," at what may have been the last of her many farewells; admired the fiddling acrobatics of Zacharewitsch, still (I suppose) playing somewhere, probably in America; listened to Mischa Elman, then an adolescent prodigy, self-conscious and foreign, in a velvet coat, in "Air—Bach", and the Mendelssohn Concerto, which I still love; heard for the first time Haydn's Clock Symphony, and (gallantly played by the Marines) the Jupiter Symphony; saw Leonard Boyne, plump and spruce, in *Raffles*, and I know not what other plays of the period. On Saturdays and evenings off there were communings with naval officers in bars, or meetings with the revolutionaries in Ruskin Hall or the open market-place. Once Frederick Rogers, bookbinder and book-lover, father and mother of Old Age Pensions, stayed with me; and once old H. M. Hyndman, social-democrat, patriot, gossip, and egoist, after a great "demonstration" at which he had eloquently talked of Marx, chattel-slavery, wage-slavery, ballots and bullets, came back with me for the night and sat up talking of the politicians of the 'eighties and the cricketers of the 'sixties—for that frock-coated and bearded old rogue, for all his assumptions of universal importance, his casual hints as to offices that Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone would have given him, his glancing references to "my friend Clemenceau", and his very candid views about the movement which he himself led, had been in his remote early day a Sussex County cricketer and was still annoyed that he hadn't obtained his Cambridge Blue. Sometimes there were walks in woods, on hills; sometimes there was a sail in a dinghy; there was a man who loved the "Shropshire Lad" and another who knew Borrow by heart. Yet, mostly it was work, and work at night; the machines drumming behind and below; the boys coming up for the little wads of copy; the scramble soon after midnight; the respite when all had gone down and it was now for the printers to finish the job; the wait for the first damp and sticky copy with everything miraculously sobered and strengthened in type, and miraculously fitting; the supper, or very early breakfast, of cocoa and cheese, under the lamps; the fearless mice who leapt on the littered table and sat up nibbling the fragments of cheese. It seems, in retrospect, charming and amusing: time adds a tone to our most trivial memories, as to our chairs, our cathedrals, and our very skin. Yet, it was stagnation and suspense, all this; and in London I resumed the progress of my youth.

Two years of waiting; an opportunity of sorts; and I began a real acquaintance with London. London for me, as for how many thousands of others, is a part of that most critical and crucial period of youth, the period of awakened intellect and fulfilled emotion. It was not the sprawling London of the suburbs, not London the swallower, London the builders' dormitory, the London that I had glimpsed in casual visits to a College Mission, or on "sprees" (the word has died out), watching a game in the afternoon and, in the evening, scrumming with a mob at the Empire or daringly drinking at some cosmopolitan lounge while, at a table apart, sat the woman of Babylon, with a large plumed picture hat, her face impassive, her eyes smiling. It was not the London of the rich nor the London of the poor—though these became gradually known: it was not, in a way, London at all: it was the mythical country Bohemia, which is inland, yet has a sea-coast: Shakespeare's paradox acquired meaning after him: only thus vaguely could be presented so shifting a place, a State which is more of a state. For me, when I entered it, I lived in that shabby Chelsea square of which I spoke. My landlady was a decayed French baroness, whose husband, long ago, had been Ambassador to Mexico, perhaps (for I cannot remember) to the Mexico of Maximilian, gallant and unfortunate Hapsburg, who ended his life (where was it I saw in youth a picture, a woodcut, peaked post-men's caps and baggy trousers: in an old volume of the *Illustrated London News*?) facing a firing-squad of his own subjects and soldiers. Being French, she was an expert in omelettes; into which she always contrived to introduce fragments of cinder and enamel from the vehicle; but she gave me several admirable French books, and her old brain was as intelligent as her grey hair was disordered. Thence did I sally in the mornings to send the most recondite metropolitan views and information to hungry minds in the country—first with ... but what does that matter? It was the evenings and the week-ends that mattered. Contemporaries had gathered from the University; they had got in touch with other young men who in some singular way had acquired intelligence, knowledge, and even wit, without ever going to the University; and in all the circles of ardour and enlightenment there were as many women as men. They were not bobbed or shingled, but they seemed so. London in those days, and at that stage of one's life, was liberation. It was possible to talk to young women, who knew all about music and economics, on even the most alarming subjects, without feeling, or at any rate betraying, the slightest embarrassment. We went in throngs to the gallery at Covent Garden, where the knees of the row behind stuck into our backs; to the arena at Queen's Hall (smoking permitted), where Sir Henry Wood perspiringly whacked out "1812" and "Finlandia"; to meetings where Chestertons and Bellocs obstinately and too convincingly countered the Bee-hive Utopias to which we had too readily surrendered. We could be Utopian then, even in a cheap tea-shop. We chattered seriously about oracles who were swindlers and fools and who are not now even remembered as that much. We sat about on the cushioned floors of studios and the

bravely brown-papered walls of unfurnished lodgings (the lodgers often very poor), exchanging mature and crystallised views about Shaw and the Webbs, Debussy, Tolstoy, Maeterlinck, Charles Booth, Trusts, Combines, Cartels, the Stage Censorship, and the Czarism. Hardy, Bridges, and Housman were there in the background waiting for us, but we never talked of them. We argued, instead, that the Poor Law must be reformed, that Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith should force through Home Rule, that Women's Suffrage should be granted—lest worse befall. We were, obviously, sometimes right; equally obviously, we were often wrong. But we had an eagerness, a directness, a capacity for enterprise and the selection of essentials, peculiar to our age, and generally lacking in old men, who wait for death and merely wish, pending their demise, to keep the old pot boiling in the old way.

Now we are ageing, those of us who are left. We have learnt much—for the old easy solutions of the garlicky cafés in Soho and the meetings of the converted were grotesque. But we have lost something. Energy and faith are as essential as knowledge: as we acquire that, we generally lose the others. Looking back on those years in which I learnt my physical London, and acquired, unforgettably, my spiritual London, I see pictures of dreaming youth preparing for action. I see Frederic Keeling (for some forgotten reason “Ben”) making statistics exciting in his rooms in the Walworth Road and his later rooms of Chancery Lane: bearded, flabby-lipped, wild, brown-eyed, much eyelashed, tumble-haired, a man gone wrong but chivalrously wrong, voluble on blue-books, fierce about sex, Germanophile, destined to be shot (as C.S.M.) by the Germans, talking, the last time he came on leave to see me, about his privates betting on louse-races—for, until he entered the Army, he had never really (for all his slumming) got in touch with the ordinary Englishman. I see again Charles Lister, in a Strand café, and in the vast bleak Gatti's in Villiers Street, sitting amid a crowd of youth of both sexes after some lecture: self-possessed, sloe-eyed, wavy-haired, with the equine beauty of his father; restlessly toying with a teaspoon, shocking his bourgeois associates as much by his aristocratic calm as by his revolutionary sentiments. And I see Rupert Brooke, who had come up to Cambridge the term after I went down, and whom I had first met on a fleeting visit in 1907 to the place. He sits in a window-seat above a crowd of gabbling people, who smoke and drink coffee and beer, and talk about Keir Hardie, the Dolomites, and Strauss. He enters a crowded room in Lincoln's Inn, fair-haired, sunburnt, serene, straight-eyed: his collar is soft-blue, his suit fits loosely but perfectly: everybody is hushed by his appearance. I drink with him in a window of the National Liberal Club, and he comments on the infant sky-sign of an enterprising tobacconist next the Playhouse: “It runs round like mice,” he says. Then, later, when first youth had gone, he came to say good-bye; sorry for the death of Flecker, not thinking of his own death, his fame, and his legend. In his brief life he travelled much: he always returned to London; he had many lives elsewhere, but in London some of us can best recover him. He died, and his death was the signal of the death of something in all his contemporaries. There were tea-shops; and luncheons by the Embankment Wall, with the familiar gulls taking the leavings. There were walks to Limehouse and the Blackwall Tunnel; there was a gradual knowledge of the Museum, the National Gallery, the Soane, Dulwich, Hampstead, Toynbee Hall: a mastery, ultimately, of the middle and operative part of London, and some clue to the suburbs. The War came: obliteration, a gulf, age.

That same London still exists, a little changed, but the same. It exists for others, not for us. We have lost our illusions, and arrived, as we think, at a sounder faith, or, the more unfortunate of us, at a deeper and more genuine cynicism. But, though they may assume other forms, our illusions and delusions persist around us, among us, in our sons, our nephews. The sons and nephews of our friends are still inhabiting a London that is new and enchanting to them, a London of hope and discovery, and eager youthful theory and experiment. We, of my generation and those generations senior to me, meet these young. We seem to establish contact with them; but they are foreigners to us and we to them. They are our own lost selves in a changed environment—an environment so imperceptibly changed that they cannot recognise us nor we them, though we may greet each other sympathetically across the abyss. What, in the intimacy of their midnight conversations, do they really think about us and the provisional beliefs at which we have arrived? What are their opinions about foreign politics or home politics? What pull does religion exercise upon them? By what moral criteria do they judge their own and each other's actions? In which direction do they intend (and what they intend will be made fact) that artistic development shall proceed? How far, when we are with them, do they exercise the control that we exercised and conceal thoughts such as we concealed: writing him down a fool whom we affected, in his presence, to admire, and worshipping, as a prophet, him with whom we never were brought into contact?

We cannot know. It is possible to imagine conversations, utterly honest, with boys twenty years junior to oneself. Some, obviously, are pessimistic, some unduly and impracticably idealistic. With either, the impulse of the elder is always to say, “When I was your age”; to dispel that unjustified gloom and break down those baseless hopes; to substitute the truths of experience for the premature assumptions of youth, thereby helping the young to stand on the shoulders of their fathers, skipping unnecessary stages in their development. Vain hope! As well urge the prospective

butterfly to omit the chrysalis stage! *Si jeunesse savait!* Were it possible for youth "to know", the proverb would never have existed. We think we remember the whole attitude of our youth; but the one thing we forget, and forget that we forget, is that we ourselves, before we passed out of that golden state, were subject to the desperate advice of our seniors, and were simply unable to grasp that these men had been young in their time and still preserved the integrity of their hearts and minds. They had (we supposed) been born elderly; or the years had made them cynical and fat; they had lost the capacity for the faith that could so easily make such great changes, or the sensitiveness which could respond to the intolerable sufferings of mankind. How could there be contact between such as they and such as we? We were another race, another people, our eyes and wills set upon something that these could never see. The young are a secret society, and the old cannot remember that they once belonged to it.

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I have wandered far from Mr. Pennell's drawings. I will not apologise, for the reader who has been really bored will not have got as far as this. Pennell was not, I think, a great imaginative artist: to me, Mr. Muirhead Bone, for all his accuracy and delight in scaffolding and girders, inhabits another world. I do not find in Pennell, either, much predilection for architectural beauty. He was fond of mass, and particularly of a great dark outline; he drew Whitehall Court or Queen Anne's Mansions with as much energy and interest as were roused in him by the greatest monuments of the past. It is doubtful if any building or any "atmosphere" (for he inherited the trick of the nocturne from Whistler) ever appealed to him so strongly as the mere vigour of man and man's machinery: the finest drawing he ever did was in his series on the construction of the Panama Canal. Yet he was a very skilful and dashing draughtsman, and a restless experimenter who never settled down to the exploration of a single medium or the exploitation of a single manner. One of his etchings might be slight, scratchy, sketchy, like Whistler's; the next might be almost as detailed and precise as Mr. Henry Rushbury's. Charcoal, pencil, pen, water-colour: he took them all up in rapid succession, and would toy in a day with modes of expression dominated by dot, dash and "squiggle", by line, by bar, by splash. He could be set down on his stool anywhere from the smoky gulf of Paddington Station to the chimney-reflecting liquid of the River Lea, and find there material for a fine drawing, a drawing still masterly for all his deficient perception of poetry and the might of historical association. The volume of his work also commands admiration; his drawings, in thousands, are scattered over two continents.

Here are fifty or so of them, and some of his best. He did not, when drawing London, greatly frequent nooks and corners, or search for neglected graces left by another age. He was quite satisfied if his voyage of exploration led him to Nelson's Monument or the Hyde Park Hotel: the one gave him a column, the other a fretted mass against the sky: there was something to draw. Yet time does wonders, and whatever passes is the subject of curiosity and affection when it has passed. Babylon fell, and Nineveh; so, in time, will the National Liberal Club. Thebes is no more, and Tutankhamen's fan is in a museum. These very drawings, for all we know, may survive London; and if they do, no one will be sorry that Pennell took more trouble with a drawing of Cannon Street than with one of Nash's Quadrant. They may even, if they have any opinion, think that Cannon Street was more representative of our civilisation. If we take a long enough view, the vilest building assumes the pathos of transience; Harrod's cometh up as a flower, and Victoria Street withereth as the grass.

J. C. SQUIRE.

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  - L. [East London.](#)
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  - LII. [The Transept, Westminster.](#)
  - LIII. [The Post Office.](#)
  - LIV. [Founder's Tomb, St. Bartholomew the Great.](#)
  - LV. [Great College Street.](#)
  - LVI. [The Tower, from the Tower Bridge.](#)



## II

### VANISHING LONDON

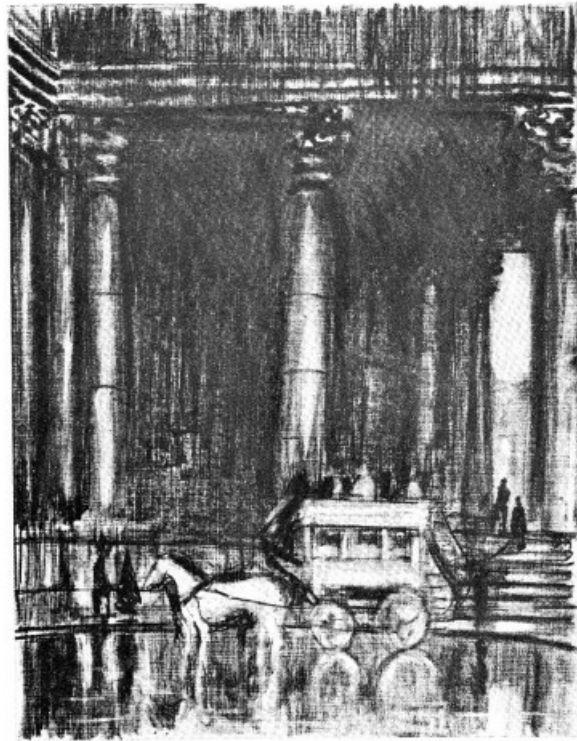
The seventeenth-and eighteenth-century courts and alleys of London had mostly vanished before these drawings were made. The Kingsway and Charing Cross Road “improvement” schemes were conspicuous stages in a process of attrition which is perpetually at work. Shepherd's Market, behind Piccadilly, may serve as a surviving type of those quiet dim-lit areas which covered half Central London in Dickens's day; and there are corners in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn and Fetter Lane where their atmosphere is still to be recovered.



### III

#### ST. MARTIN'S PORCH

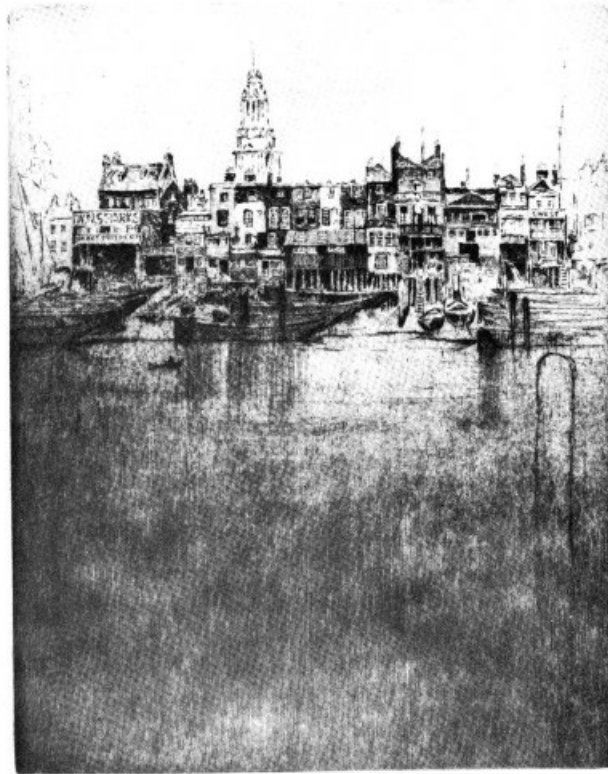
The Porch of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, built by Gibbs (architect of the great classic building at King's, Cambridge) in the early eighteenth century. Nell Gwyn, Chippendale, and Jack Sheppard the highwayman are buried there. It is the Parish Church of Buckingham Palace.



## IV

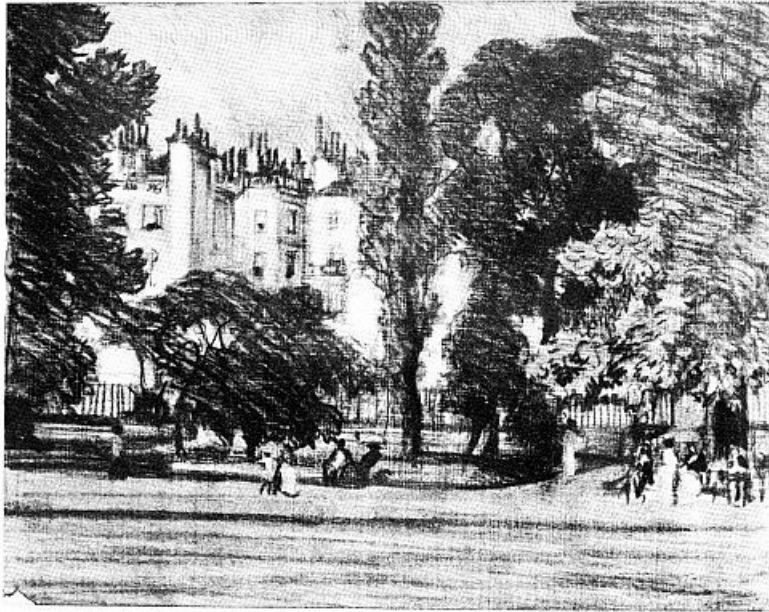
### LIMEHOUSE

Old riverside houses at Limehouse—a part of that fascinating north bank which is seen by those who have the enterprise to go down by water from Westminster to Greenwich, and acquire the full meaning of the phrase “The Port of London”.



## PARK LANE FROM THE PARK

The discreet and gracious Park Lane, the destruction of which is now in full swing. Where these houses stand the next generation will probably see a row of great cubical flats and hotels overtopping the trees.



## VI

### BAKER STREET

Baker Street: a “long, unlovely street”, as flat as its name, but giving the draughtsman an opportunity because of its severely rectilinear quality. All things, as the poet says,

Beauty take from those who loved them  
In other days,

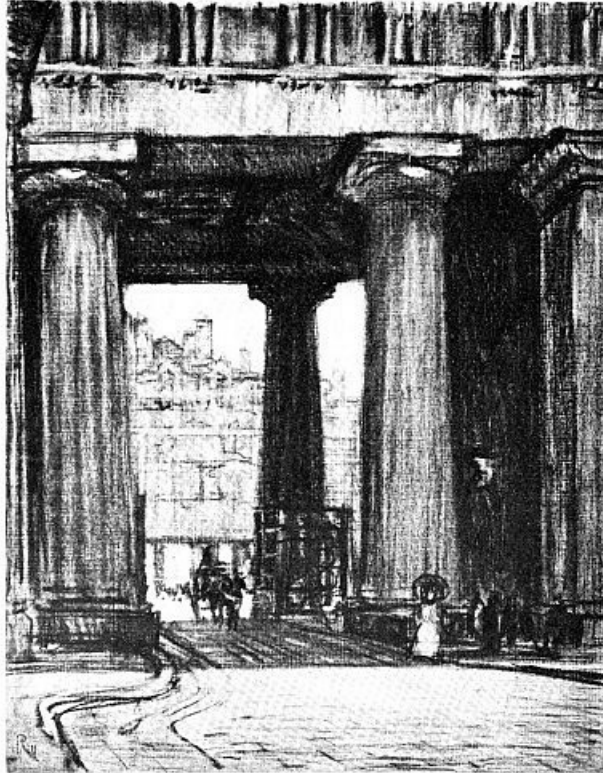
and this street has been less uninteresting since Sherlock Holmes, with his pipe and dressing-gown, took up his abode in it, and listened sympathetically to the stories of a succession of pale young ladies dressed in black.



## VII

### EUSTON STATION

The entrance to Euston Station, with the finest Doric columns in London. Their mass is a perpetual fascination to etchers and other artists. This approach has little organic relation with the station behind, but it is worth having for its own sake. Had the railway directors not spurned Watts's offer to decorate the main-hall of the station with frescoes, for nothing, this station would be doubly attractive.



## VIII

### PICCADILLY CIRCUS

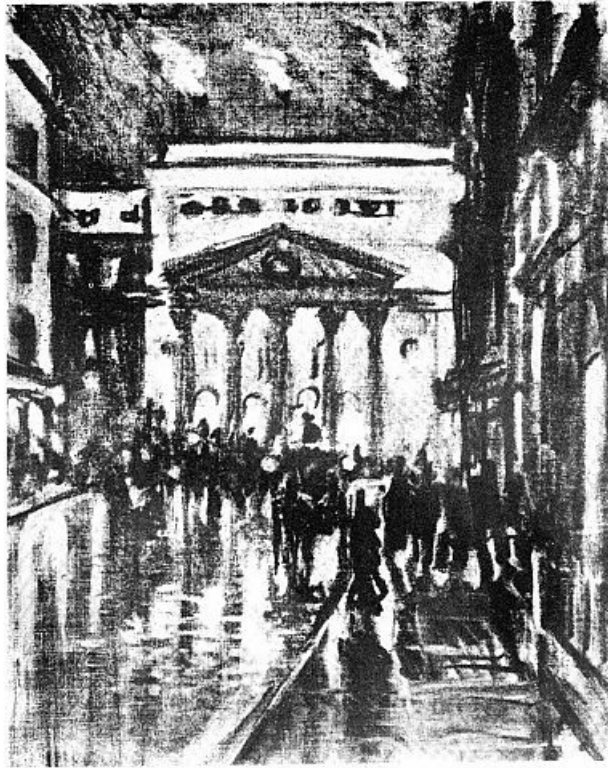
Eros in Piccadilly is the work of Alfred Gilbert, the great sculptor of the Duke of Clarence's tomb at Windsor, completed in 1928 after the aged artist had lived for twenty years in voluntary exile. Everything has changed, Eros is temporarily on the Embankment, whilst new underground burrowings are going on; and Nash's Quadrant has been replaced by Sir Reginald Blomfield's very charming and dignified work. Half the circus is still a squalid congeries of mean buildings, intolerable in the very centre of an Empire's capital.



## IX

### HAYMARKET THEATRE

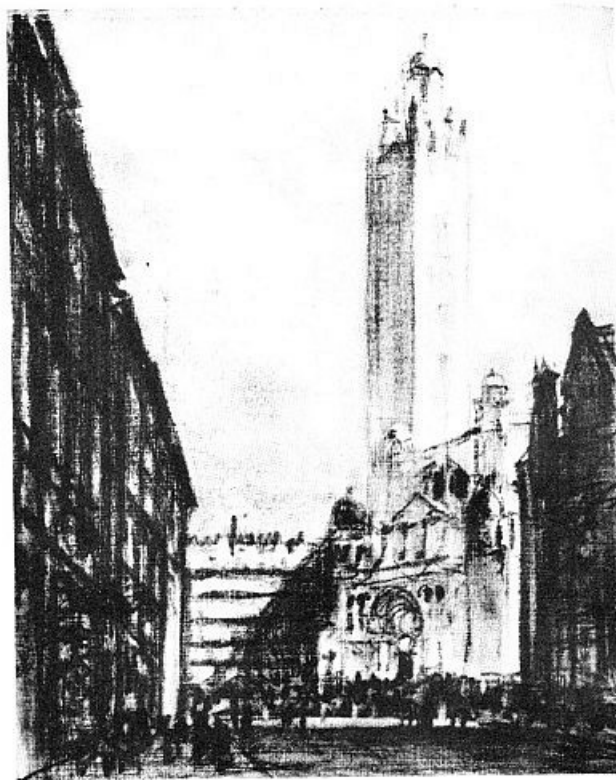
The Haymarket Theatre, founded in 1720, but rebuilt a hundred years later. Long the home of traditional English light comedy, particularly under the management of the late Frederick Harrison.





## THE CATHEDRAL, WESTMINSTER

The Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, a Romanesque brick structure, built in 1895-1903 to the designs of J. F. Bentley, is beyond question the finest modern building in London, and one of the finest in the world. The campanile is 283 feet high, and, from a distance, dominates many prospects; but close at hand the cathedral is very imperfectly exhibited, being huddled around by uninteresting flats. Cardinals Wiseman and Manning are buried in the crypt. The decoration of the interior with mosaics, etc., is gradually proceeding, but nothing could be more impressive than the great surfaces of plain brick left by the builders.



# XI

## CLOTH FAIR

Cloth Fair, demolished a few years before the war, was the most considerable relic of Jacobean London. Gabled houses with overhanging stories are now almost as rare in Central London as they are in New York.



**ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK**

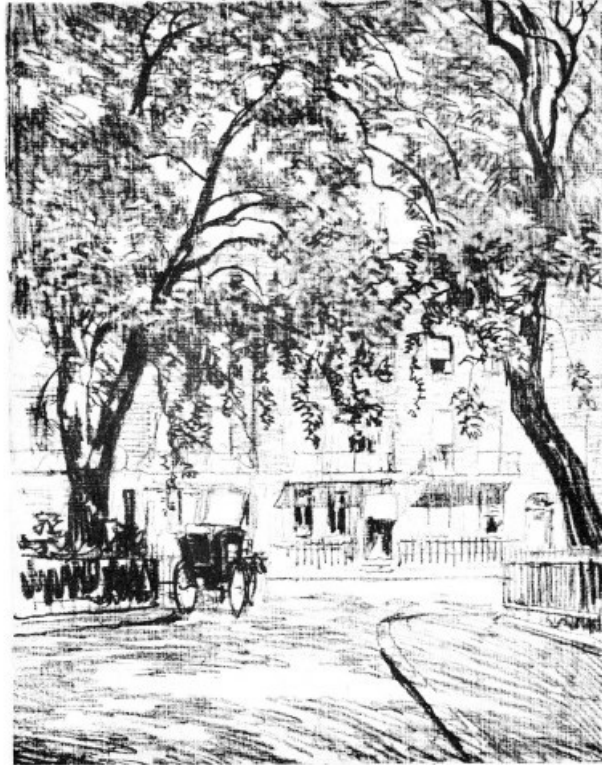
The interior of this church is a masterpiece of architectural mathematics, which has won great admiration from Wren's successors. It includes a domed ceiling which is commonly supposed to have been a kind of preliminary canter to St. Paul's.



## XIII

### WOBURN SQUARE

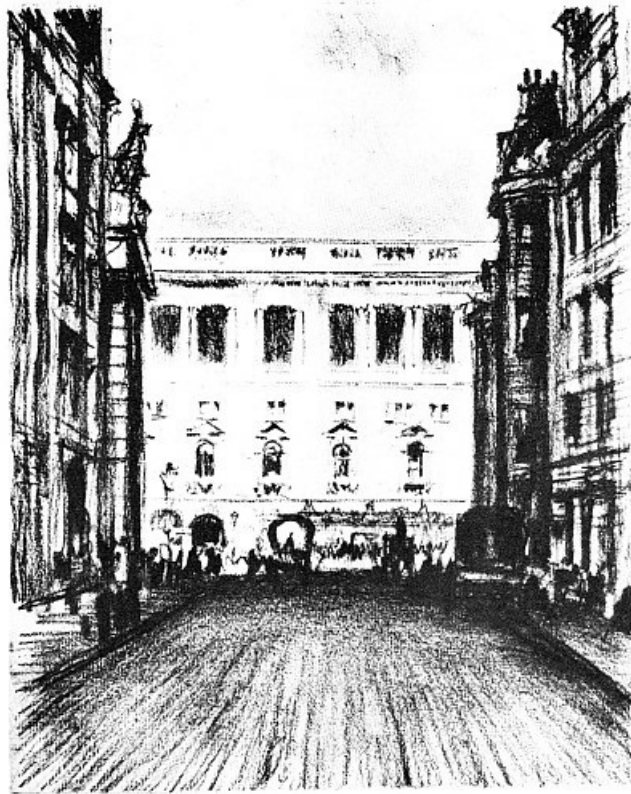
A pleasant drawing, with a Gallic touch, of one of the less imposing of the Bloomsbury squares. The lowered sun-blinds and the fresh foliage suggest a warm bright day in May or June. The lilacs are over; nurse-maids sit reading in the gardens; sparrows twitter, and there is a distant rumble of traffic from the Marylebone Road.



## XIV

### THE GAIETY

The Gaiety Theatre was new when Pennell drew it. It is one of the most successful works of the late Norman Shaw, who also designed New Scotland Yard and the Piccadilly Hotel—which last was an eyesore so long as the rest of Nash's Quadrant remained, but has been successfully embedded in the new Quadrant by Sir Reginald Blomfield, R.A.



## PICCADILLY PALACES

Apsley House, part of the nation's present to the great Duke of Wellington, still stands, and so do its neighbours on the right. The rest of the Piccadilly of Pennell's day is rapidly vanishing. No. 80, the old Royal Thames Yacht Club, with its delicate balcony, was a great loss, and the Savile Club, No. 107, is now awaiting demolition by the proprietors of the glazed hotel next door. The fine house of the Isthmian Club has been preserved as the Green Park Hotel, and the St. James's Club seems safe.



## XVI

### DUNCANNON STREET, FROM CHARING CROSS

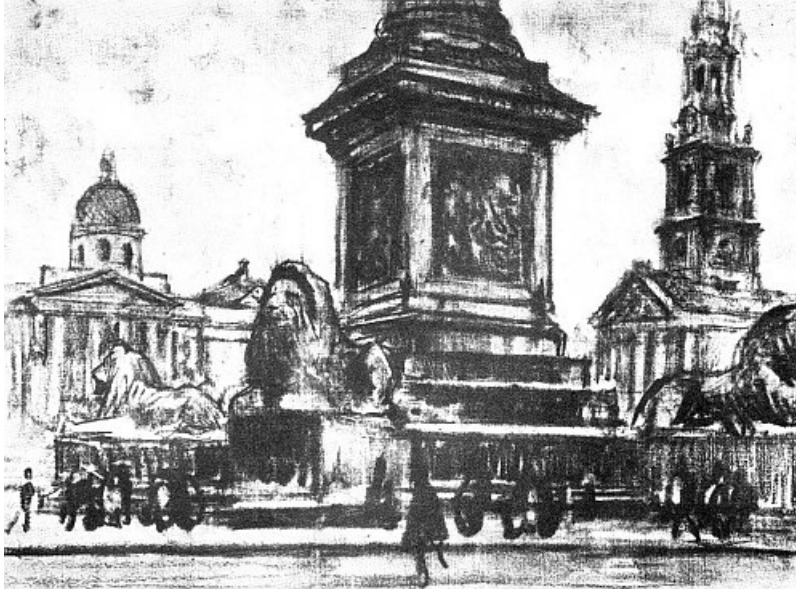
This is an unusual view of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, with Smirke's dome of the National Gallery in the background. It is a good example of Pennell's effective use of vertical lines.



## XVII

### LIONS, TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Sir Edwin Landseer's lions, in Trafalgar Square, wearing the look of resignation which is begotten of the hearing of much oratory.





## XVIII

### THE NELSON COLUMN

Sailing the sky  
With one arm and one eye

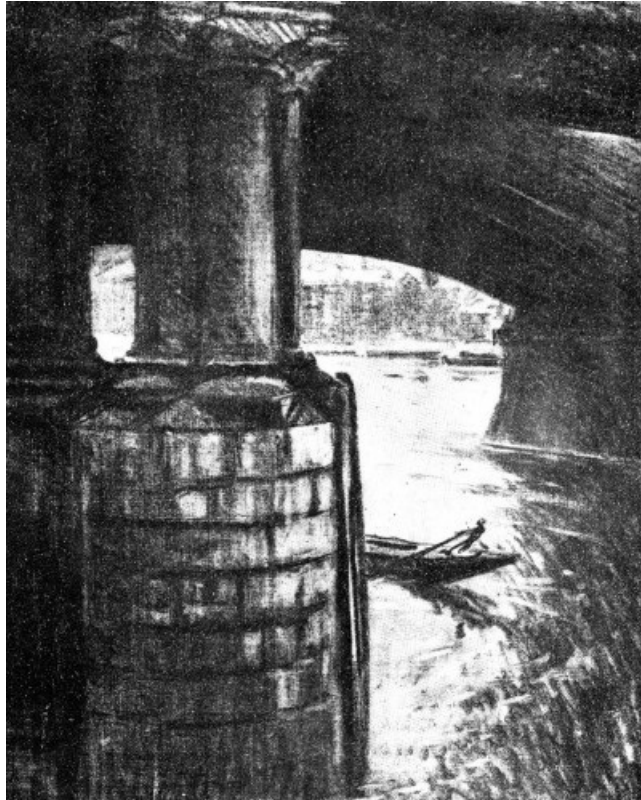
was the note on Nelson in one of the many fine poems which the Poet Laureate, Mr. Robert Bridges, published during the war—and the same aspect of this sky-borne, weather-daring statue in Trafalgar Square has been seized by Joseph Pennell.



# XIX

## UNDER BLACKFRIARS

Shooting a bridge. The sucking eddy round the great pier is indicated. Labour and skill are needed here if ship-wreck is to be avoided; and the problems of the river-navigator have always to be borne in mind when new Thames bridges and their spans are under discussion.



**FLEET STREET**

The edge of Fleet Street and the Strand. The clock of the Law Courts and the beautiful lacework tower of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West. This tower is not so fine as the magnificent coronal, a sort of assembly of flying buttresses, which Wren daringly put upon St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, but it is very remarkable as a specimen of early nineteenth-century Gothic. Over the doorway below is a weather-beaten little effigy of Queen Elizabeth. It used to stand on the old Lud Gate, from which it fell (remaining intact) when the gate was burned in the Great Fire of London.



## UNDER CHARING CROSS

This is one of the drawings in which the artist's discipleship of Whistler is most evident. Presented thus vaguely, even that abomination Charing Cross (or Hungerford—after the vanished Market) Bridge is impressive.



## BUCKINGHAM PALACE

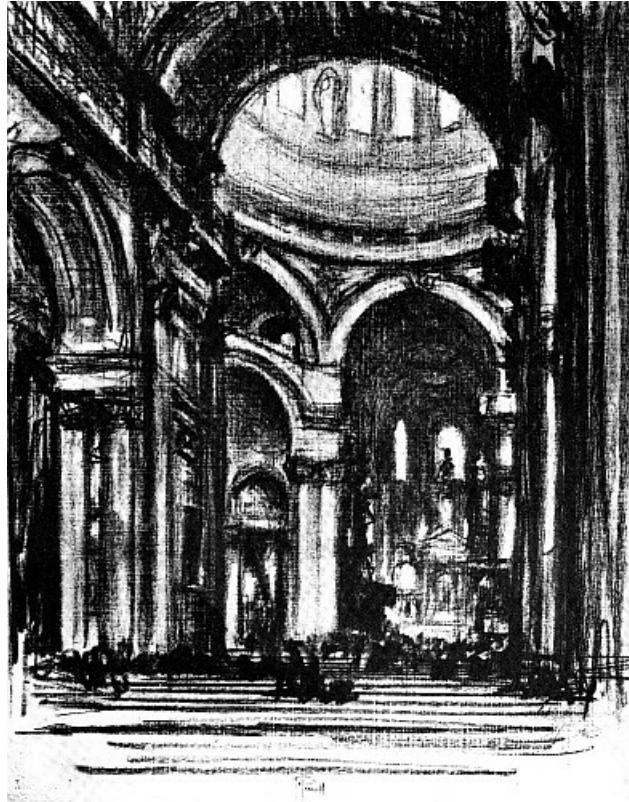
This is the old façade of Buckingham Palace. It was ugly, and the sculptured decorations along the top were very bad and grossly out of proportion. Some years before the War these were removed and the Palace refaced after designs by Sir Aston Webb, P.R.A.: one of the instances in which alteration has meant improvement.



## XXIII

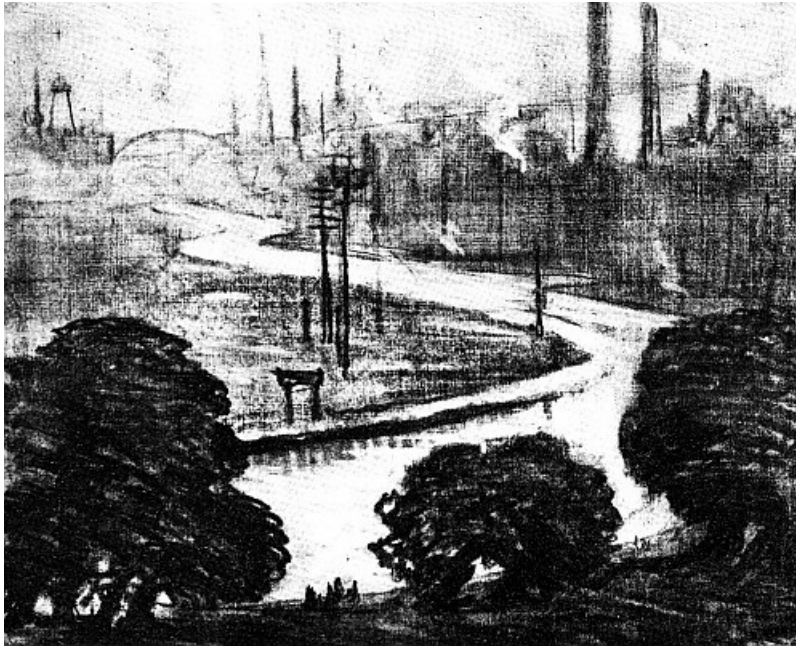
### ST. PAUL'S, THE NAVE

A varied cluster of curves in St. Paul's Cathedral. Solid though they look, the piers are having to be "grouted" for support. They were gloriously designed, but jerry-built; and the honeycombing of underground London has made them more precarious than ever.



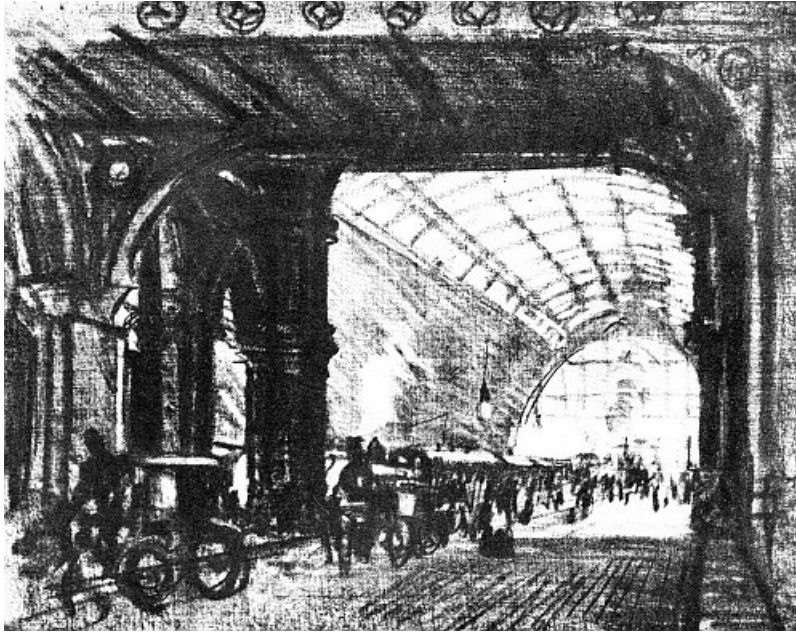
## EAST LONDON—THE RIVER LEA

A typical glimpse of London's industrial outskirts, with their pictorial possibilities strikingly seized. The trees in the foreground have an ironic effect. The Lea flows into the Thames at Bow Creek, which divides London County from Essex. In this picture there is no promise of a mouth: it is like some permanent, sourceless, and mouthless river out of Dante.



**ST. PANCRAS STATION**

There is nothing peculiarly “St. Pancras” about this bold drawing of massed and graduated shadows. It might almost be the Platonic type of a London terminus. It was built by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1865.





## XXVI

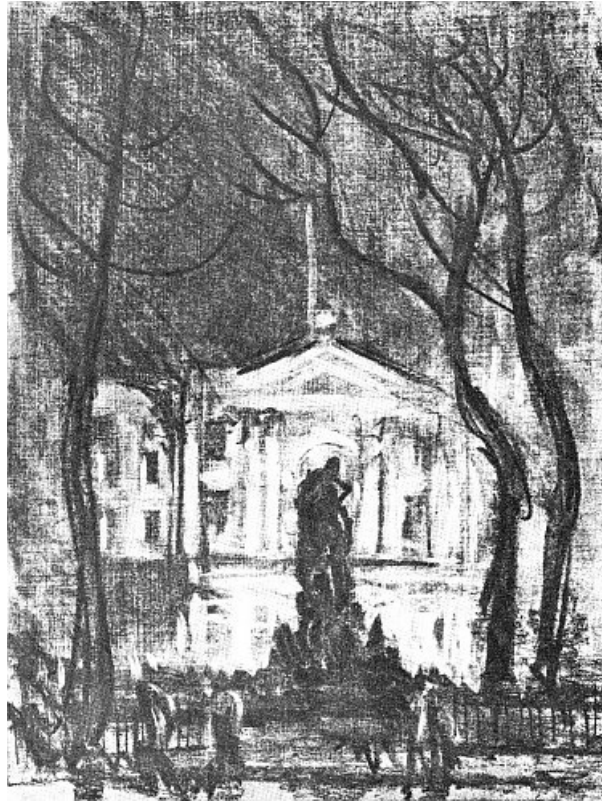
### CHARLES I

The statue of Charles I. (by Hubert Le Sueur) at Charing Cross, near the scene of his execution, was cast in his lifetime (1633), was not erected in his lifetime, and lay, during the Commonwealth, in a brazier's yard. He sold pretended bits of it for years, and, at the Restoration, disclosed it. It was erected here in 1675 with a pedestal by Wren. Lionel Johnson wrote a very fine poem on it, and on the Royal Martyr's anniversary its base is still pathetically honoured with wreaths from Jacobite Societies.



## THE EMPIRE

The old Empire Music Hall when Adeline Genée was in her glory. The figure in the foreground is Shakespeare. Pennell has certainly not under-dramatised the scene.



## XXVIII

### QUEEN ANNE'S MANSIONS

A fine bold drawing of one of the most inexcusable buildings in modern London. When this place was built the problem of attempting to “do something” architecturally with huge blocks of flats had not been faced at all. Massiveness of size has seldom been so successfully combined with meanness of effect. In a “pretty garden-house” of Petty France, on the site of this monstrosity, Milton began *Paradise Lost*, and Hazlitt lived later. It was pulled down in 1877 for this.



**SHIP-BREAKERS, PIMLICO**

These old figureheads still (1928) decorate the ship-breakers' yard where Grosvenor Road (the Embankment) runs into Vauxhall Bridge Road.



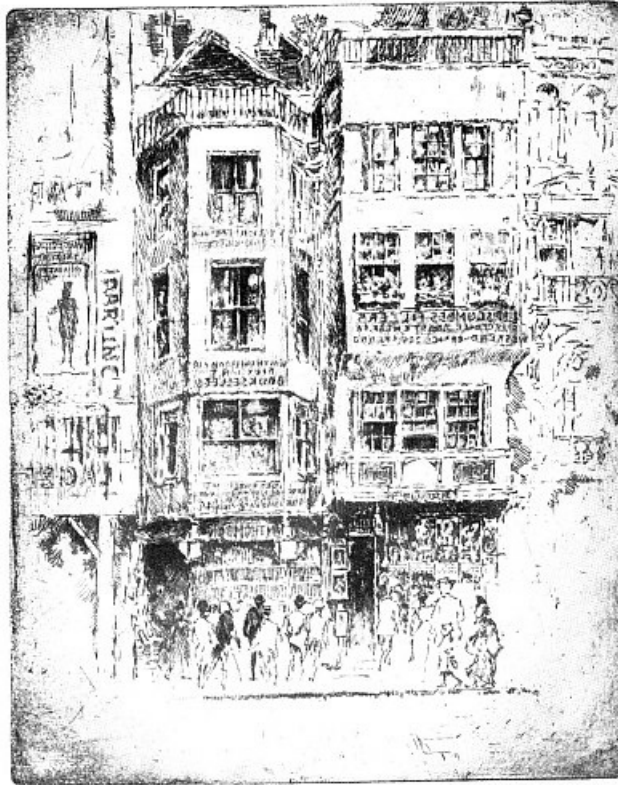
## THE SPHINX

The extremely effective guardian of Cleopatra's Needle—bomb-sprinkled during the war. In the background there is a glimpse of what was the finest panoramic view in London before Waterloo Bridge went into splints and a temporary bridge was erected behind it. The future of that view—the sweep of the river, the great spreading front of Somerset House, the benignity of the dome over all—is at present unsettled.



## 230 STRAND

Two of the oldest houses in London. No. 230 is still a bookseller's. The ground-floor of 229 goes through constant vicissitudes, as regards both structure and use; the upper portion has been little changed since the seventeenth century, and is now the office of the *London Mercury*.



## THE STRAND

There is an epigram about Wren:

Oh would that that immortal hand  
And more than mortal brains,  
Had built St. Mary's in the Strand  
And not St. Clement Danes.

This is St. Clement Danes, where Johnson worshipped, where the London Devonians have their annual service, and where a puny statue of Johnson adorns the churchyard. The pinnacles of Street's Law Courts look their best from this angle and in this stormy atmosphere, which gives full value to the bleached surfaces of stone.



## THE HIPPODROME

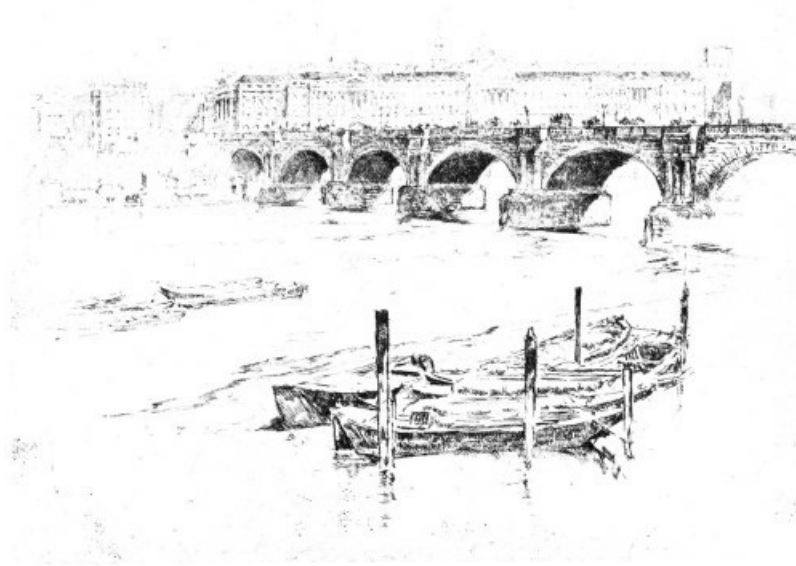
The Hippodrome: the horse at the top is about the only connection the building has with the ancient arena after which it is named. One thing leads to another and structures may now be encountered which are called "Cinedrome" and "Picturedrome".





## SOMERSET HOUSE

The fine view of Somerset House over Waterloo Bridge—taken at too sharp an angle to show the curve of the river to St. Paul's. The great block of Bush House, in Aldwych, has now been added to the background. Its architect originally planned a tall tower, which would materially have altered this view, but it has not yet been erected. When Waterloo Bridge was built (as a War Memorial) it was deliberately intended, in design and material, to harmonise with Somerset House—an example of scene-planning unusual in London.



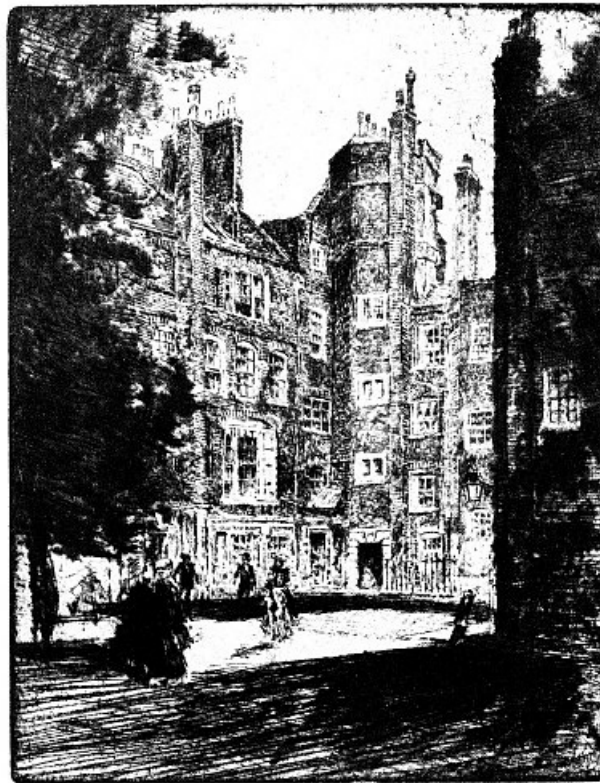
**LONDON, OVER HAMPSTEAD**

The great North London views over the city are not always to be obtained; but on certain fresh, hazeless summer days of blue sky and white cloud, and sometimes at sundown and before rain, the spectacle of the town, with its forest of domes and spires, from Hampstead is magnificent, and the shape of the basin in which London has grown can be clearly apprehended.



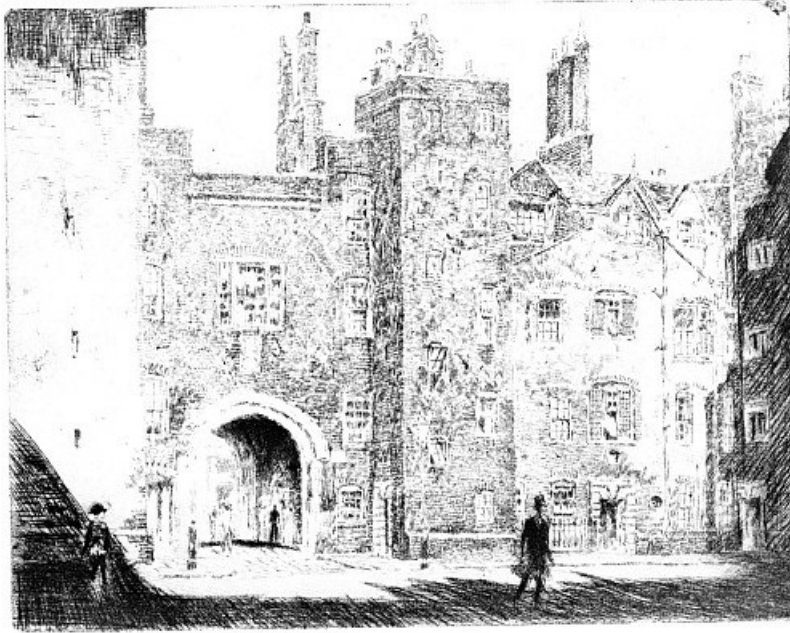
## OLD COURT, LINCOLN'S INN

Lincoln's Inn was founded about 1300. This is a charming seventeenth-century corner of an Inn which contains also a great brick gate-house in Chancery Lane (built c. 1520), a chapel by Inigo Jones (the old glass of which was broken by a Zeppelin bomb), an Old Hall of the late fifteenth century, which has recently been restored after a century-old defacement, and New Square, a noble expanse of late seventeenth-century buildings. A walk from the Embankment through the Temple, across the Strand, through Lincoln's Inn, across Oxford Street, and through Gray's Inn (especially when the trees are out), is the finest walk in London; and we owe it to the lawyers.



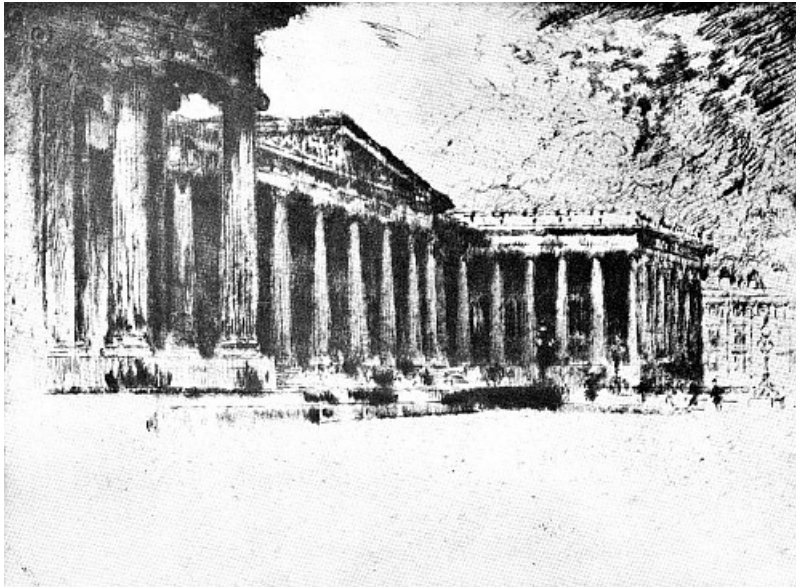
**THE GREAT GATE, LINCOLN'S INN**

The Great Gate (*c.* 1520) leading from Lincoln's Inn into Chancery Lane. Ben Jonson, during his early and problematical employment as a bricklayer, is reputed to have worked on this gate. It was erected by Sir Thomas Lovell, and bears his arms.



## THE BRITISH MUSEUM

The great classical façade of the British Museum, as thickly clustered with doves as any ancient temple. The main building, designed by Sir Robert Smirke, was begun in 1823, and in 1914 Sir John Burnet's fine King Edward VII. Galleries were added on the north side. The nucleus of this, the greatest museum in the world, was the collection bequeathed to the nation by Sir John Cotton in 1700.



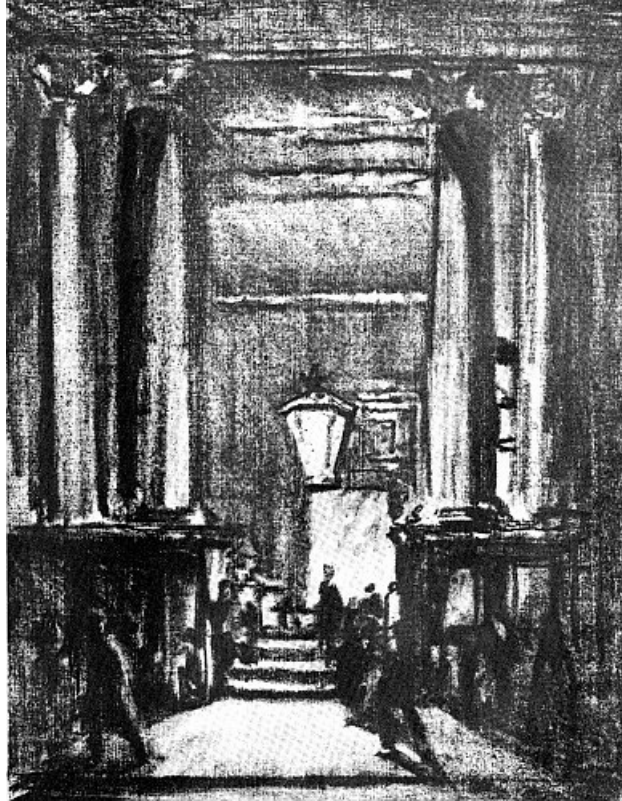
**ST. JAMES' PARK**

St. James' Park: originally a marshy field attached to a Lepers' Hospital; drained by Henry VIII., who made the hospital a palace; frequented by Charles II., his spaniels, and the characters of his playwrights; finally shaped by Nash. The views of Government offices over the lake are among the most enchanting in London. The waterfowl include rare ducks and geese, and penguins. The lake was drained during the War and "Lake Dwellings" erected. These have now been removed.



**EXETER HALL**

This hall, which here wears the aspect of an Egyptian temple, was a great home of Evangelicalism and May Meetings. It was pulled down, shortly before the War, to make room for the Strand Palace Hotel. The "Exeter", like the adjoining "Burleigh" Street, marks an historical connection with the Cecil family. North and south the purlieus of the Strand—there are an Essex group and a Norfolk group—bristle with these family names.



## ST. PAUL'S DOME, FROM CANNON STREET

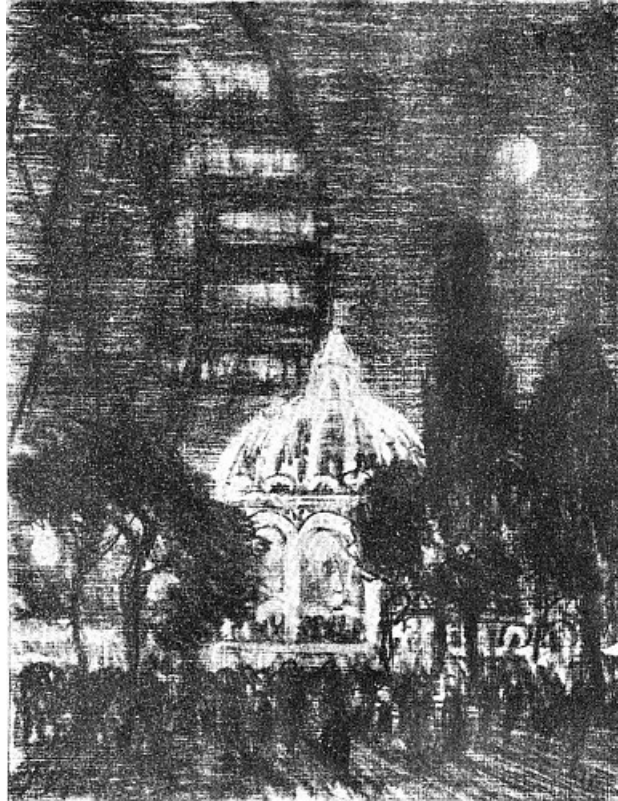
It is frequently complained that there is no fine approach to St. Paul's. Wren himself planned one, and the thought is always in the minds of City reconstructors. There are compensations in the numerous charming unexpected glimpses that can be obtained from City streets and alleys.





## THE BIG WHEEL, EARL'S COURT

Time was, before the days of the White City, much less Wembley, when the Great Wheel at Earl's Court was to London what the Eiffel Tower was to Paris. All England, almost a generation ago, was petrified by the news that it had stuck in mid-career, with a full load of terrified passengers suspended in the air. "Constantinople in London"; "Venice in London": these, and such enterprises of the late Imre Kiralfy, are recalled by Pennell's picture of Earl's Court in full swing.



## XLIII

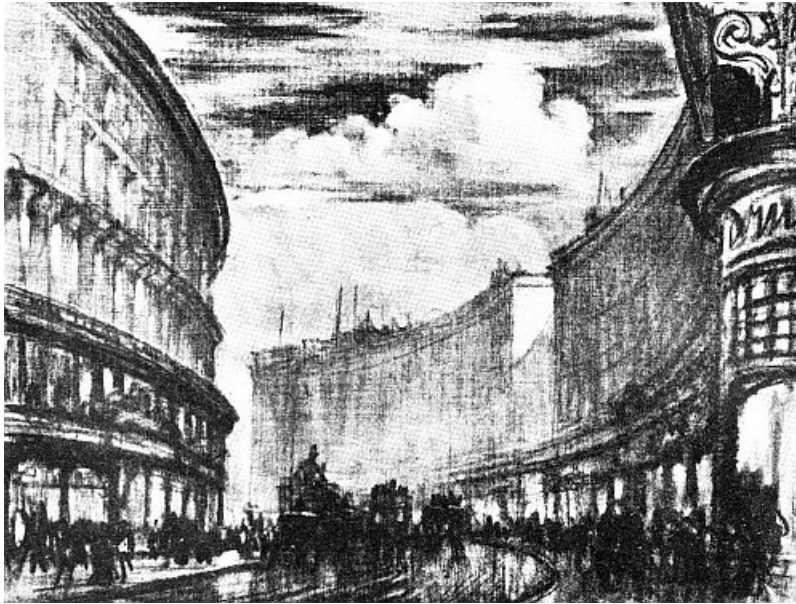
### VICTORIA TOWER

The tower at the House of Lords end of Westminster Palace—336 feet high, with a western archway 50 feet high. From this tower the Union Jack flies in the daytime when the House of Commons is sitting.



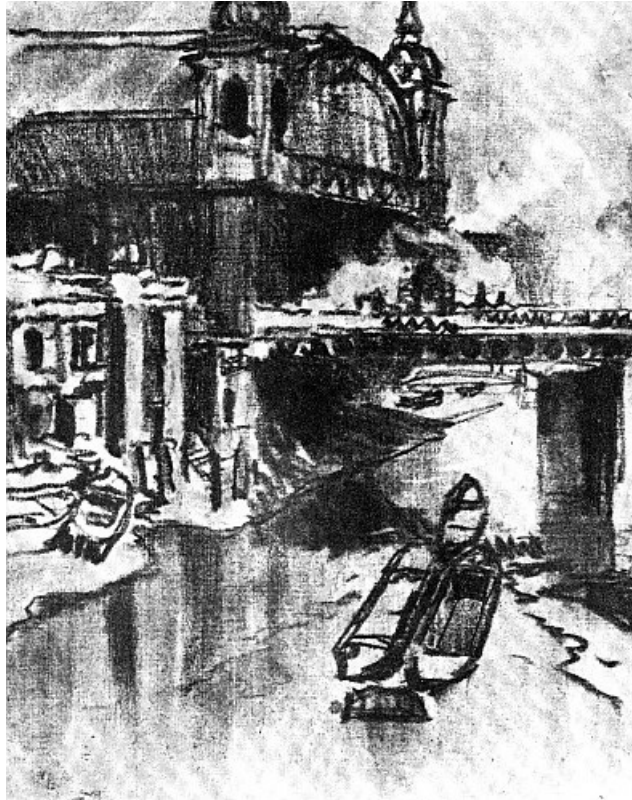
## REGENT'S QUADRANT

Nash's old Quadrant in Regent Street. The street was originally (finished in 1820) designed to connect Carlton House with Regent's Park, and was adorned throughout with arcades. First these were removed; then Nash's buildings went; but the example was not lost and the Quadrant has been succeeded by Sir R. Blomfield's fine uniform façade.



**CANNON STREET STATION**

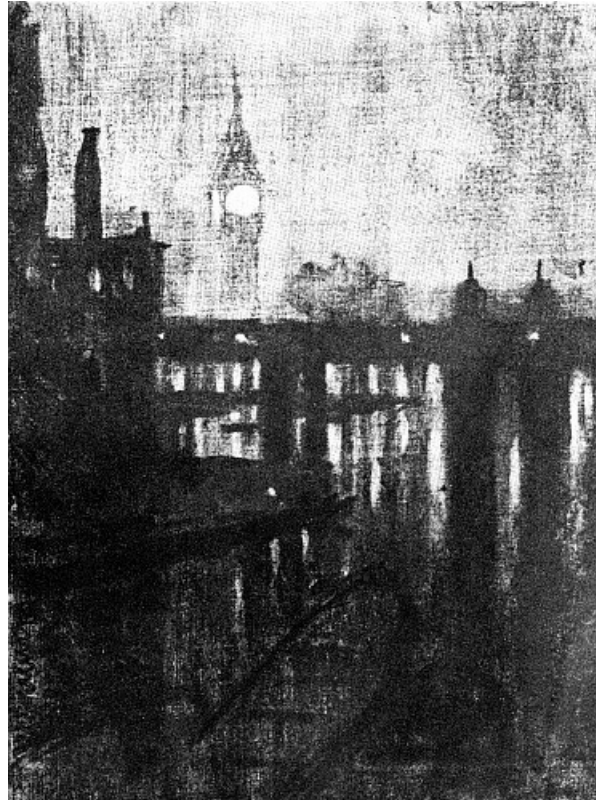
The only thing to be said for Cannon Street Station is that it stands on the site of the Steelyard, the London depot of the Hanseatic League, which occupied the site from the twelfth century to the nineteenth. Steam and grime, however, afford delights to the draughtsman not always appreciated by the layman.



## XLVI

### CLOCK TOWER—NIGHT

The “Big Ben” tower of Westminster, 316 feet high. In the “lantern” a light burns when the House is sitting. The bell, “Big Ben” (named after Sir Benjamin Hall, First Commissioner of Works), weighs  $13\frac{1}{2}$  tons, and its strokes are now heard daily wherever the British wireless stations are audible.



## STRAND, FROM THE LAW COURTS

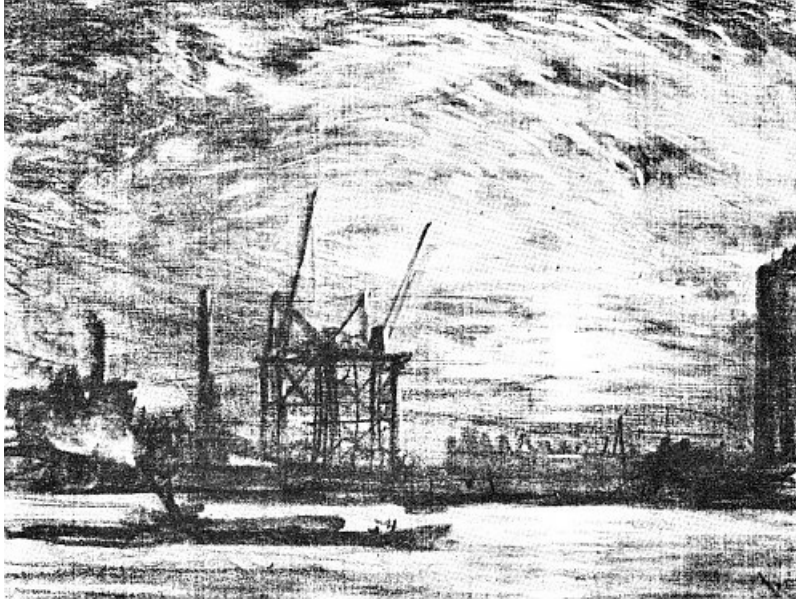
St. Clement Danes, from the arcade of Street's "New Law Courts", a Gothic building impressive in outline, but ineffective, if learned, in detail.



## XLVIII

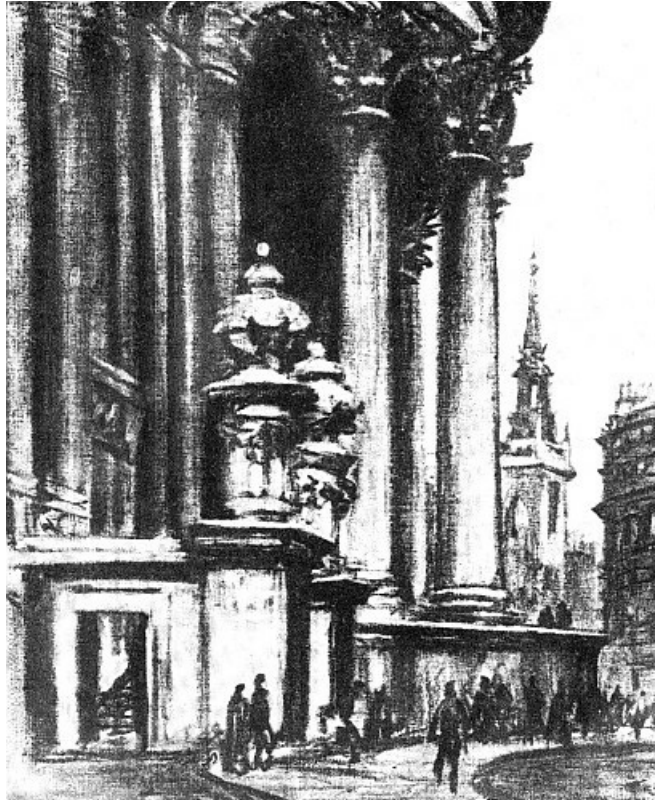
### SUNSET OVER WATERLOO

Sunset and mirk on the Thames by Waterloo: muddy water, smoke, and the gaunt appurtenances of industrialism, all glorified by an atmospheric extreme, as they frequently are in London.



## SOUTH PORCH, ST. PAUL'S

The South Porch of St. Paul's, with the delicate spire of St. Augustine's in the background. The weathering of the Portland Stone on this façade is particularly fine. The houses to the right are warehouses in St. Paul's Churchyard, and very unworthy of the contiguity.

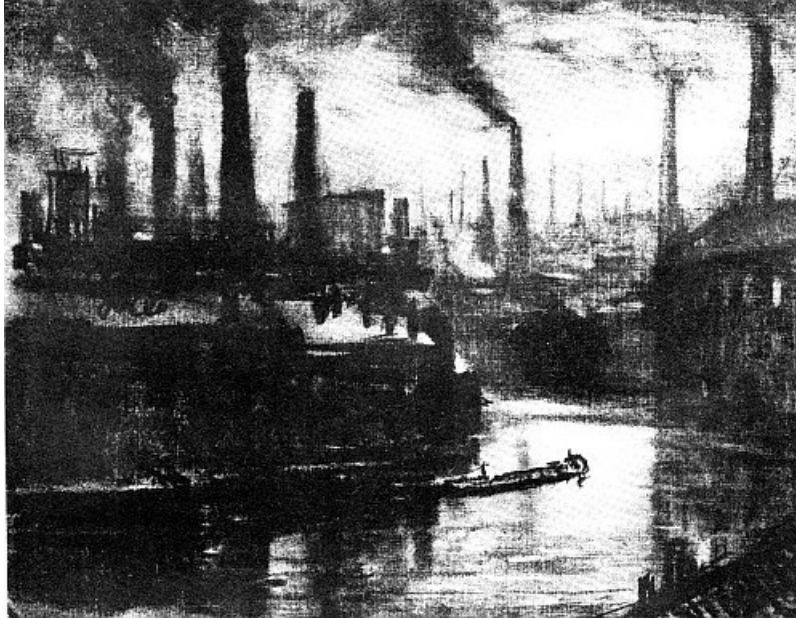




# L

## EAST LONDON

Industrial London treated with a decorator's eye, on a sad winter's day.



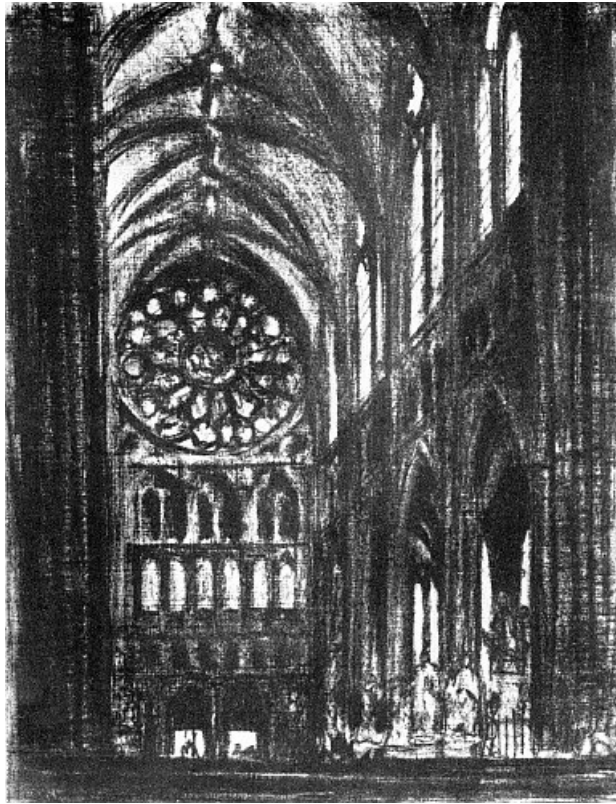
**ST. MARY-AT-HILL**

St. Mary-at-Hill, an old City church rebuilt by Wren.



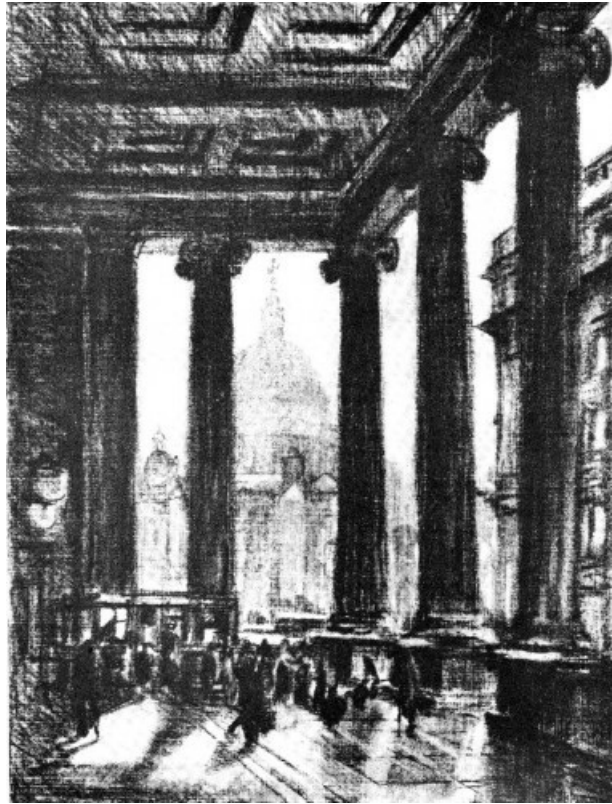
**THE TRANSEPT, WESTMINSTER**

This is the North Transept of Westminster Abbey, with its great rose-window. It was built in the end of the thirteenth century, and contains memorials to statesmen, including Canning, Pitt, Gladstone, Peel, Palmerston, Fox, and Cobden. "Poets' Corner", where Thomas Hardy's ashes were the last to be interred, is in the South Transept, from the entrance to which the drawing was made.



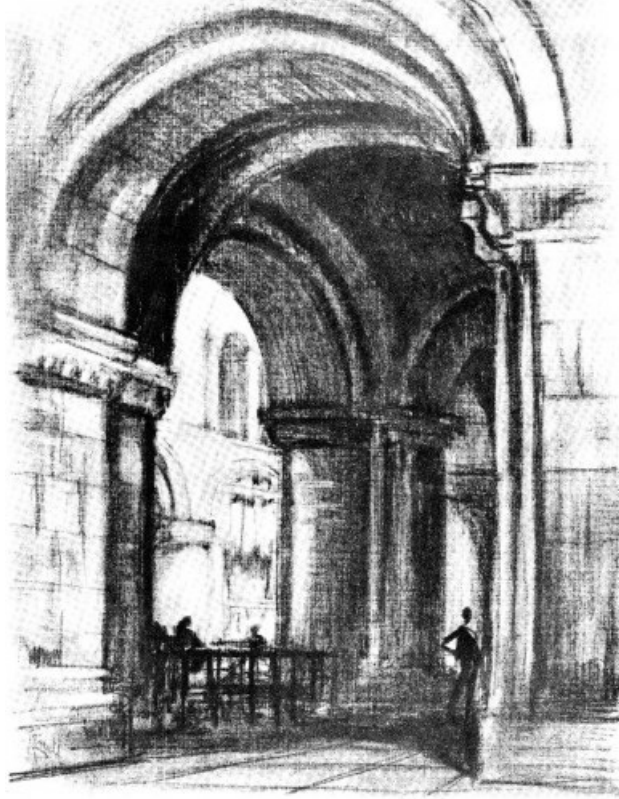
**THE POST OFFICE**

The old General Post Office, at St. Martin's-le-Grand, now pulled down (1913) and replaced by another building. It was built in 1829 during the great epoch of London pillaring. The name was taken from that of a Collegiate Church which lasted from Edward the Confessor's reign to Edward VI.'s, and from which the Curfew for the City was rung.



**FOUNDER'S TOMB, ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT**

St. Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield, is the greatest Norman relic in London. Its founder (1123) was Rahere, a secular canon of St. Paul's, who established an Augustinian Priory here.



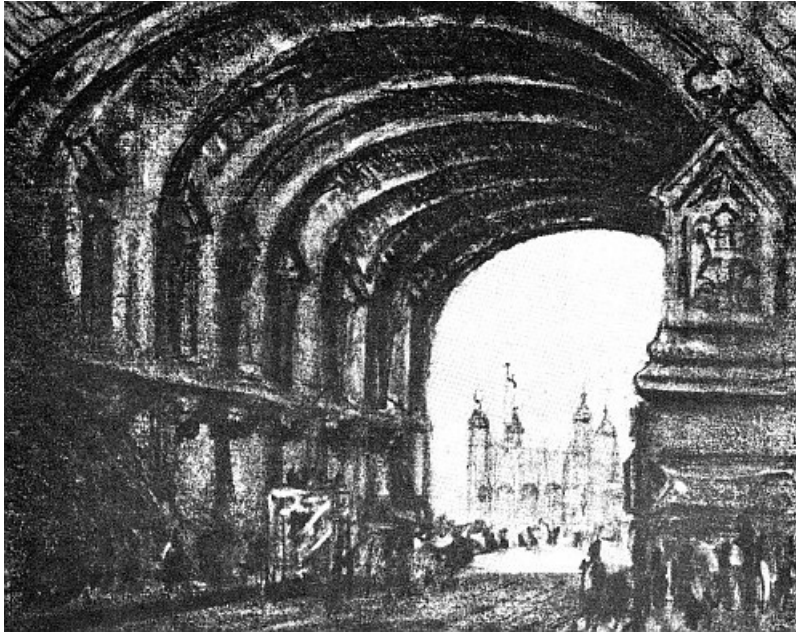
**GREAT COLLEGE STREET**

Great College Street: a charming relic of Georgian London of the type still not extinct in Westminster and Chelsea.



## THE TOWER, FROM THE TOWER BRIDGE

Tower Bridge was built in 1885-1894. Its entrance is used here for a frame to the comparatively operatic turrets of the Tower of London.

**Transcriber's Note:**

[Page 8](#)—Unable to find a definition for wiggish, although it's possibly a typo for waggish. It has been left as in the original.

[Page 25](#)—Typo correction from slow-eyed to sloe-eyed.