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Past Glories

Restaurant Round-Up

The dear old Carlton Grill at the bottom of the Haymarket has gone at last. It is to make way for a splendid new building for the New Zealand Government, and so yet another old London eating landmark has faded away. I said at last, because when the hotel part of the Carlton ceased to function, one felt that sedate grill room could count its days numbered.

But I like to think back on some of London's restaurants which have succumbed.

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At the bottom of Charlotte Street used to be Poggioli's, accepted, I believe, as the cheapest licensed restaurant in London, when a plate of spaghetti cost 5d. and a glass of Italian wine certainly not 2d. more—7d., I mean. Now it is the home of Mario's exclusive Belle Meunière, where Princess Margaret has often dined. Then a few yards away stands the equally exclusive White Tower Greek restaurant run by the charming M. Stais; a spot I commend to you. It used to be the Tour Eiffel—what memories! Old Stulik ran it and the Prince of Wales used it a lot in the 1920's. Augustus John almost had his own table there. So did Nina Hamnett, and also Alastair Crowley. On the walls were several giant tortoise shells which I bought when the place was up for auction, but somehow, like the restaurant, they, too, seem to have disappeared.