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WITH OUR TICINESI.

Back home in our country, whenever we get, what is vulgarly called "browned off", we pack our bag and travel southwards to the sunny Ticino. Of course, it is not always sunny there, it can rain too, and how!!; yet even the name Ticino casts a spell over us, and the rain seems to be somewhat less wet, or at least warmer.

The weather authorities in this country have of late meted out fearful punishment; fog, rain and snow have followed each other with monotonous regularity, and consequently almost everyone has suffered from colds and sneezing fits. On my daily travels to and fro to the City, I invariably feel, as if I had been transferred to the Zoo; the coughing and "barking" of thousands of fellow travellers sounds not unlike the roaring of the lions round about feeding time.

Tempers get strained, and a most uncanny feeling of depression seems to affect one, and we are longing and praying for a little sunshine. In such a mood, I received the kind invitation to attend the Tea Dance of the Unione Ticinese, which took place on Sunday, January 25th, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1.

Some time ago — as a matter of fact it was one of my New Year resolutions —, I decided to politely decline all invitations to functions in the Colony which are fixed to take place on Sundays, as even an Editor is entitled to a little rest sometimes, but it is common knowledge that resolutions can and are broken invariably; I simply did not have the heart to say No to our Ticinesi, and I must confess that I was not sorry to have, so early in the year, changed my mind.

The weather conditions on that Sunday were by no means favourable, the sun, as usual refused to make an appearance, but there was plenty of sunshine in the six hundred hearts of our compatriots from down south, who attended this Tea Dance. What a jolly and light hearted crowd our Ticinesi are, and how pretty their young girls are; their sparkling eyes and gay laughter acted like a tonic, and for once, fog, rain and snow were forgotten, and even my old heart began to beat with new vigour, and a feeling of immense *joie de vivre* took hold of me.

* * *

Soon after 5 p.m. Harry Vardon and his band invited everyone on to the dance floor, which, owing to the quite unexpectedly large attendance, was somewhat overcrowded, with the result that quite a lot of "bumping" took place, but this state of affairs did not seem to discourage the happy revellers, even "bumping" can be a pleasurable experience, especially when one's dancing partner is comfortably padded.

There were many dances, which I have rarely seen before, some of them rather wild and just a bit unruly, but all enjoyable. To give everyone a chance of getting their breath back and to recover from the strain, Tea was served shortly before 6 'clock.

Mr. P. de Maria, the congenial President of the Union Ticinese took advantage of the lull in the proceedings to convey the Society's greetings to the principal guest, who was representing the Swiss Swiss Minster — the latter being unavoidably prevented from attending —, namely Dr. G. Lepori, 1st Secretary of Legation. He voiced his regrets, that his charming wife, Madame Lepori, was unable to be present owing to her being in Switzerland. The President also welcomed the Editor of the "Swiss Observer",

accompanied by Mrs. Stauffer, as well as the representative of the family Gatti, a family who for many years played a conspicuous part in the history of the Society. Mr. de Maria gave vent to his satisfaction at seeing such a large number of members and friends present wishing them all an enjoyable afternoon and evening. He concluded his address by thanking the organising committee for their efforts, singling out members of the family C. Berti, who are one of the pillars of the Unione Ticinese.

There were no more speeches, thank goodness — who wants to listen to speeches on a Sunday anyhow? —, and dancing began anew, this time with a most weird performance, I felt for a moment as if I had been transferred into the heart of blackest Africa. With the band intoning a sort of pom pom music couples suddenly, and without warning, turned savage and began to wriggle and turn and twist like mad. I forgot the name of this exotic dance, but thanked my lucky star, that I was spared the ordeal, what would our grandmothers have said to this?

Then a cabaret started, headed with a performance by the famous "Corale", under the conductorship of Mr. P. de Maria. They need no introduction, we have all heard them many times before at various functions of the Colony. They sang, as usual, a number of popular Ticino folk songs with great vivacity and precision and richly deserved the applause of the company so spontaneously given.

They were followed by Ming Chow, "the light

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fingered one". Dressed as a Chinese, complete with pig tail, he gave an astounding performance of conjuring. Wrist watches, wallets and necklaces disappeared with amazing speed, card tricks, etc., were no less clever. I do not know whether he has ever been to China, hailing, as I was told, from somewhere north of the Gothard, but he certainly was successful in creating an atmosphere of this strange country.

Victor Barrett and Doreen Freeman gave a perfect performance of graceful ballroom dancing.

Then dancing continued and only ended at 11 p.m.

It was a most entertaining and successful afternoon and evening, and our cari ticinesi are to be heartily congratulated on having enabled us to forget for a few fleeting moments our daily cares and worries.

ST.

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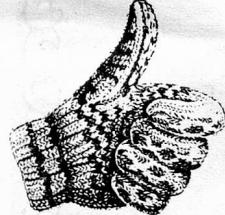
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