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UNIONE TICINESE OUTING.

With a superhuman effort on Sunday, 17th June, we bestirred ourselves at the usual weekday time, rose, gulped down our bacon without egg, rushed to the station, booking office still unopened, caught the first "up" train, transferred to the Tube, and finally arrived outside Swiss House, in Fitzroy Square out of breath but just in time to take our seat on one of the four comfortable motor-coaches drawn up to take some 120 members of the "Unione Ticinese" and friends on the annual summer outing, this year to Clacton-on-Sea.

We were soon motoring through the empty streets of North London bathed in sunlight under a cloudless sky. The heat was momentarily relieved as on leaving Woodford we entered Epping Forest to drive on into rural Epping and on to Ongar and Writtle. After skirting the urbanised area of Chelmsford, Essex County town, we stopped for elevenses. Indeed we were grateful to the organizers for thus having afforded us an opportunity of getting more fully acquainted with Essex, accounted by some people as the poor relation amongst the Home Counties. Why this should be so, after what we saw, we cannot explain. We were struck by the rural quality of this area. Large fields of wheat and beet gave way to pastureland with large herds of grazing cattle of various strains, while charming villages with Norman church and old-world 'pub' near the green corresponded to such mediaeval names as Thorpe-le-Soken and Laver de la Haye. And how rich in history is this angle of England too. One does not have to search long for the spot where once stood a Roman fortress or Danish or Saxon stronghold, Norman castle or Tudor palace, with Colchester the most historical place of them all. The former Camulodunum, built on a hill in a bend of the river Colne, is one of the claimants to the title of the oldest borough in England — and almost certainly it is the first town that the Romans built in Britain.

In view of this it was a pity that reaching it after practically an hour of crawling along the road at snail's pace from Chelmsford owing to a hold-up caused by road repairs at a roundabout, we were unable to stop and pay at least a visit to the Norman castle.

This delay was to cost us more dearly still for when we reached our Hotel at destination we were

informed that another party was being served and our meal would be ready in an hour. This enabled us to make a short reconnaissance of the Clacton-on-Sea front. The modernity of the place impressed us. It was not the huge seaside beach we expected to find, and while well frequented it was certainly not crowded.

After lunch we hastened to the sands with the best of intentions of making a splash (please read us literally). But after allowing some time for the digestion as recommended by the best medical authorities it took the faintest of breezes to make us change our mind and decide that, after all it was too cold for a swim. The more spartan ones, however, did take a dip, while the majority who through natural inclination prefer the mountain to the seaside had a wonderful time on Clacton's famous pier.

Reluctantly at the appointed hour we made our way again to the hotel for tea, and then home in the coaches. The congested roads made also the return journey longer than scheduled and it was nearly midnight when we reached Fitzroy Square again. The care-free singing if not at all times harmonious was a sure sign that a good time had been had by one and all. Well done, the Entertainments Committee!

J.E.



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