

to deliver Italy from the barbarians is one of the most beautiful passages in his works, because it is inspired by powerful passion. And Machiavelli's great charge against the Roman Church at the opening of the sixteenth century

was that it had not united Italy against the foreigner. His criticism of the Church was therefore purely political. It had no connection whatever with the religious grievances that produced the Reformation.

RESTAURANTS IN ITALY

From The Saturday Review, June 4
(TORY WEEKLY)

ITALIAN restaurants succeeded in Soho by appealing at once to palates and purses, overcoming even rumors of dirt and resurrected scraps. There was also a mysterious magnetism of slumming, seeing life, brushing Bohemians, almost exploration. The proprietors were shrewd business men, who knew how to make the most of every crumb; they boxed and coxed compasses reappearing one minute as waiters, and disappearing the next to cook. Then here they were again, as cashiers, cab-runners and chuckers-out. If they were content to remain expatriated, they soon blossomed forth as the imperious owners of palace hotels.

It is an odd thing about Italians that they do things well abroad, and things ill at home.

There are probably few more vivid contrasts imaginable than that between the Italian restaurant in London, and the Italian restaurant in Italy. The present writer has spent ten months in Italy, and can speak from experience after some six hundred restaurant meals. The charges of those six hundred meals did not seem heavy with the English exchange at ninety lire to the pound, but the caterers seemed to think their business was to do those who dined. Any Italian will tell you that he fares more

cheaply and sumptuously in his own house.

To begin with, they make the most of nothing. Neither reason nor interest nor entreaty will ever induce them to provide rissoles, hashes, minces, stews, made dishes of any kind. The invariable answer is, 'If we prepared them, even with the freshest meat and all the arts of Brillat-Savarin, no one would touch them. We should be suspected of using up the leavings of past meals.' Deliberate waste is accordingly universal and prodigious. Even cold meat is almost taboo. A joint is cooked, carved, and consigned to the dust-bin, though there may not be half enough provisions to last the peninsula half through the winter.

Dr. Johnson once described a certain leg of mutton as badly killed, badly hung, badly cooked, and badly served. What would have been his irascibility if he had crossed the Alps and broken meats in a *trattoria*? We know how to breed and feed and hang and cook the roast beef of old England, whereas French *rosbif* is nearly always a delusion, because the French breed for veal, beating us there into a cocked hat. But Italian veal and beef are blackguards both. Italians have practically no mutton, and will brazenly tell a Highlander

or a Welshman that it is never fit to eat. Their chickens are stringy, and only just palatable if cooked immediately after slaughter. Hanging, they say, is prohibited by their climate, though that need not necessarily save the necks of their cooks. . . .

Macaroni, however, does admittedly assume a whole Fregoli arsenal of disguises, and made at home with many eggs and great care, beaten, and rolled, and coaxed, and stuffed with rare dainties, is fit to set before a pre-war king. But in the average restaurant of Italy it is mere paste, made in a factory, garnered for months by a grocer, and served with preserved tomato-pulp.

Again, there is probably no country possessing such a wealth of beautiful fruit, but every restaurant in Italy offers it unripe, and at six or ten times what it costs at the stall round the corner. Except badly baked pears, hot and clammy and horrid, it rarely appears in a cooked form. Some is exported for jam-making, but no jam was ever made at home, even when sugar was plentiful. One feeble excuse for that is a scarcity of jars and tins, though plenty of glass seems available for bottling wine.

Italians have only one way of cooking potatoes, even new potatoes, which they slice and fry in oil. They spoil all their other luxuriant vegetables — artichokes, egg-plant (*aubergine*), chillies, French beans, etc. — by chopping them up and soaking them in oil. There is no harm in good oil. Indeed, it is infinitely preferable to bad butter, but it must be used with a discreet judgment, whereas Italian cooks have a heavy hand.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Italian fare, and the most shocking to a stranger, is the lamentable absence of good wine in one of the most generous vine-producing countries of

the world. There are exquisite light white wines at Frascati and other Castelli Romani, and various remote villages in all parts of the peninsula. But you must make pilgrimages to drink them, for they will scarcely travel a yard. Most of the bottled beverages — especially the so-called Capris and Chiantis — are unskillfully doctored. The red wines are too rough for educated tastes, but used to be exported profitably for blending with *vin ordinaire* and begetting cheap claret. Now, however, newly enriched Socialists and other war-profiters drink up all they produce, and Italy actually imports more wine than she sends out. The favorite restaurant wine is Barbera, a violently effervescent red wine that tastes of tannin and seidlitz powders. There is some fun in watching a young waiter open a bottle in the near neighborhood of well-dressed people and speculating on the subsequent language.

Your Italian waiter in London looks as if he had slept in his tail-coat, but he is usually civil almost to excess. In Italy, next to a railway-man, he is the most intolerant and aggressive of citizens. Here is a typical incident, that occurred at Ferrara. A diner complained mildly about cold soup, long delay, or some such trifle, and was treated to violent abuse. The proprietor ventured to remonstrate, whereupon not only did the rude waiter depart at once, but all his colleagues laid down their napkins and followed him. As they were not taken back at once, every waiter in the town struck next day out of sympathy, all except the non-unionists in one hotel, which had its windows broken. That sort of thing occurs constantly, and most clients treat waiters with respectful awe. You may even hear them call 'Mr. Waiter' (*Signor Cameriere*) not altogether ironically.

A PAGE OF VERSE

HARLECH IN EARLY SPRING

BY ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

[*The Spectator*]

NAKED tree shadows lay sharp on the
road;
Carmine bright were the brows of the
hills;
With a steady flame the gorse bush
glowed;
In a riot of silver tumbled the rills.

Far underneath me the Morfa lay,
A patchwork quilt of bog-myrtle and
sedge,
Apple-green pasture, marsh-land gray,
As I stood at the brown wood's edge.

VORTICISM

[*The Saturday Review*]

Red or yellow, black or green,
Dots and dashes on a screen—
Shorthand of an art obscene!

Gone the godlike curve and line
From the human form divine!
Gone is beauty's secret sign.

Gone the light from every eye,
Blindness hides the starry sky—
Beauty's dead—oh, misery!

Groping hands that seek to trace
In the darkness light and grace,
Can but fashion evil's face.

Fashion him, as evil can,
Like, yet how unlike, to man,
Crooked, pitiful and wan!

Where once beauty brightness shed,
Evil scatters dark instead!
Lying lives and truth is dead,

CHILD'S PENTECOST

BY EVELYN UNDERHILL

[*The Westminster Gazette*]

I know the Holy Ghost is glad
When we enjoy the things He made:
No artist could be cross and sad
Who thought of rabbits in the glade,
Or shining button-buds new born
Within the branches of the thorn.

They say He hovered as a dove
Above the One who loved Him best:
I think He dwells in feathery love
With little birds of many a nest—
Darts with the seagull through the
spray,
Is merry in the tomtit's play.

His skill it is that guides the hand
To draw the curve, to sew the seam:
And His the wit to understand
Hard sums, and His the dream
Of fairy things, unnamed, unknown,
Seen in the woods when we're alone.

Come, Spirit! not with sudden wind
Or fighting flames of Pentecost,
But in the breezes small and kind
By which the baby boughs are tost.
Come! with Thy touchings soft
and bright,
And lift the leaflets to the light.

'OUT OF THE VIOLENT STREAM'

BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

[*The Nation and the Athenæum*]

Out of the violent stream
A green field, Judah's prophet said
In time long dead.
Even so, with April-thoughted eyes,
Shall Ireland rise
Up from her bloody dream.