

LIBERTY SONG

By THAYER WALDO

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THE man in the officer's chair lit a fresh cigar and angrily fumed the match aside.

"Cockeyed, idiotic business!" he snarled.

"A whole production tied up while we sit here waiting for some wop bum to be dragged in off the streets. It's the damndest thing I ever heard of!"

Stuart Booth eyed him contemptuously and said nothing.

Fiberg made a gesture of conciliation.

"Now listen, Nick," he begged; "be reasonable a little, couldn't you? Ain't the only chance we got worth anyhow a try?"

"Yes; I should think, Hormell," Booth put in coldly, "that after all the fuming you've done over this part, you might see how my suggestion works out before you start crabbing."

The director twisted swiftly around in the chair to face him, snapping:

"Look here, Stuart; I never agreed to this wild notion of yours, and I won't pretend to now. Here we have a scene that needs an operatic star, and you talk 'em into going after a dago banana peddler you've heard yodelling behind his pushcart. If I'm expected to entuse over that—well, it's a laugh, that's all."

"All right; now we'll just add the rest of it: you want an Italian tenor, yet you can't afford anyone big for such a small role. There's no foreign language singer available on the lot, so where are you? Stuck. And then when I offer the one idea that may solve your problem, you beef!"

"Well," Hormell grumbled, "it simply doesn't sound sensible. If he was going into a chorus. . . . But the man's got to do a solo, and—"

"Hey, look!" Fiberg had turned toward the sound stage entrance.

"Is that him?"

The others swung around.

Just inside the door stood a little round man in baggy trousers and a gay lavender shirt.

His great mop of black curls was uncovered and the olive moon face beneath showed gentle perplexity.

Stuart Booth went forward, calling:

"Hello, Pietro! Come right over here."

The Latin's teeth gleamed in a wide slow smile.

"Ah, Signor Booth! You send for me, si? Dey no tell me—Joost say, 'You Pietro Pasquale? Come to da studio.' I don't know what ees, but here I am."

Hormell had approached and was staring critically at the Italian.

Before Booth could speak again, he said curtly:

"All right, Tony—let's hear you sing."

The small dark man gazed up with polite incomprehension and replied:

"Excuse, plees; da name she's Pietro, an' I don't know Joost what you talk. Maybe you joke, si?"

"Keep still a minute," Booth said sharply to the director; "give me a chance to explain to him. . . . Listen, old timer; we're in a fix here; you can help us out and, incidentally, make yourself fifty dollars for a couple of hours' work—just singing."

The fellow made a quick little bow and said:

"Sure, sure; she's made me very happy to do somet'ings for you."

The set across the stage, however, had caught his eye and he started to wander off toward it.

The actor grasped his arm as Hormell let out a snort of exasperation and demanded:

"Well, are we going through with the farce, or is this gentleman just a sightseer?"

"That's what I'm saying," Fiberg agreed.

"He acts like he was doing us a favor. What's the big idea?"

Pietro met the producer's scowl with grave dignity.

"Excuse, plees," he corrected; "she's only for Signor Booth! I do eet."

Fiberg gaped incredulously a moment; then:

"Say, what's the matter from you?" he yelped.

"Nobody's asking you should do anything gratis. Fifty smackers you get for just one song—even if you don't sing very good, maybe!"

Again that broad calm smile spread over the swart features.

"That ees all right, signor. I'm love to seeng, anyhow."

Once more he commenced to stroll away. Stuart Booth cried:

"But, Pietro! It has to be done this afternoon—right now!"

The Italian halted at once, a mildly shocked surprise entering his expression.

"Oh—si? Excuse, plees; I'm not understand."

A savage groan from Hormell.

"Listen, Booth," he bawled; "either you get that spaghetti gobbler warbling in the next two minutes, or I quit. Savvy?"

The actor glared sourly at him and turned again to Pietro, explaining:

"You see, there's an Italian sequence in the picture we're making. Several of us are traveling along a mountain road and we come to a small inn. The proprietor's sitting on the piazza, carrying wood and singing some air from an opera. Now that's what we want you for! Can you do it?"

Pietro laughed—a full and carefree sound with no hint of scorn in it.

"Why, sure!" he exclaimed buoyantly.

"You mean like dees?"

Back went his head, a breath was taken, and suddenly there poured forth a rich torrent of golden melody as he began an aria from "I Pagliacci."

It rose and swelled and filled the great room with glorious music.

In a moment people from all over the stage had gathered round.

Not a note in all that song was less than perfection.

Long before he had finished, Fiberg and the director were huddled together, whispering excitedly.

Even Stuart Booth was astonished.

At last it ended and the little Italian gazed about him, a trifle startled.

Then Hormell and the producer were rushing forward in a dual fever of ingratitude.

"Say, that's the finest thing I ever gave a listen to!" Fiberg chattered.

And the director:

"Marvelous! Where have you been hiding all these years?"

In a quick aside to Booth, he breathed: "My G—d, man—why didn't you tell me about this sooner? He's the greatest find I've ever run across!"

Fiberg, an arm about the singer's shoulders, was talking rapidly:

"Now, Mr. Pasquale, here's the way I'm figuring it. You'll want to do a couple of small parts and then we star you. How about a six months' contract with options, at—well, say two hundred and fifty a week?"

The three studio men waited, their eyes upon the Latin's face.

For an instant bewilderment was there; then slowly he looked from one to the other with something very like disbelief.

"Joost a meenute," he said finally; "Maybe I'm don't understand again. You want that I come here every day and seeng for da peectures, si?"

They nodded.

Pietro Pasquale made a queer small noise in his throat and stepped back, shaking free of the producer's embrace.

"Excuse, plees!" He spoke with a ringing firmness. "She's very kind of you—but, no!"

"You—you mean you're refusing the contract?"

"Si, signor."

Palpably he was in dead earnest.

"Listen, plees: When I am a boy een Milano, always I seeng, Joost for happiness. Den one day somebody she's hear me an' say, 'You mus' study for da career! I am young fool, so I do eet. Five, six year I keep on, at las' get een La Scala opera an' pret' soon have da name een lights. Bravo, bravo! But all da joy she's gone when each night I have to seeng so much, so long. So now I have geeve all dat up an' come here where I can poosh da cart to make enough for Rosita an' da bambinos an' me. Seeng? Signor, I do eet for gladness, but she's not enough money een all da world to buy from Pietro a song ever again!"

Nevada Marsh Yields Rich Sodium Sulphate

Sodium sulphate, once a plentiful by-product of nitric and hydrochloric acid manufacture, has become relatively scarce in this country because of recent changes in the manufacturing processes of those acids, writes P. C. Rich in Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering. Just when it began to appear that the United States would have to depend on imports for its sodium sulphate, an isolated desert marsh began to yield this chemical in practically pure form. This strange deposit, where sodium sulphate, or a "glaubers salt" can be scooped up by steam shovel is known as Rhodes Marsh, and is located in Mineral county, Nevada.

A few years ago, P. S. Williams, a chemical engineer at one time associated with a concern producing sodium sulphate from Carrizo lake, California, came across an old report of Prof. Joseph LeConte, geology professor at the University of California, in which mention was made of an enormous deposit of glaubers salt at Rhodes. In 1928 he was able to interest a group of San Francisco men who spent considerable time prospecting the deposit, surveying the markets, and investigating processes for recovery of the sulphate. The first plant was erected in 1930. With the experience thus gained as a basis, a program of improvement was initiated late in 1932.

Rhodes Marsh is roughly circular in shape. The mineralized section is about 200 acres in area and covered with 6 inches to 2 feet of silt. On the south half of the deposit, a 15-foot layer of glaubers salt is found immediately under the overburden; in places it has been found to be present at a depth of 80 feet.

Mother at Seven

A case of a child born to a seven-year-old girl, reported by Dr. Hilda Keane, of Victoria Zenana hospital, Delhi, is mentioned in the British Medical Journal. An unmarried Mohammedan girl was admitted to hospital on March 15, 1932, says Doctor Keane. Her age, as given by her father, was seven. Her general development was good, and she had fair intelligence. Her height was only 3 feet 11 inches, and her weight only 48 pounds. She still had her milk teeth. A living female child was born weighing 4 pounds 3 ounces. Beyond suffering from fright for the first three days, the mother made a perfect recovery and was able to nurse her child for nine months.

Economy

Son—You sure are a lucky man, father.

Dad—Why so?

Son—Because you won't have to buy me any school books next year. I didn't pass.

Treating of Food Matters

Exposition by Dietetic Authority May Relieve Some Perplexities of Readers; Suggestions for Sauces to Suit All Tastes.

The following suggestions and advice are from a recognized American authority on the subjects dealt with:

The column today is devoted to answering questions which have been asked by readers. Perhaps some of these questions have been in your mind, but not enough to urge you to take your pen in hand. Here is the first:

"Which are better—broad noodles or thin noodles, and what is the best way to cook them?" The answer is neither is better—some like one kind and some like another. Probably the thin cut noodles are most popular for soup. For noodles boiled or fried, a medium size is usually chosen, although one of the best dishes made from the foundation, which I had the other day, used the very thinnest. The boiled noodles were dressed with almonds browned in butter and sprinkled with poppy seeds. This is a dish of German origin, and is really food for a gourmet.

Now, as to cooking noodles. They should be placed in boiling water and cooked only until tender—five to eight minutes is the average time. Noodles need plenty of butter or sauce with them, as they are rather bland in flavor. One good combination is noodles, fried apples and buttered fine bread crumbs; grated cheese, tomato sauce, stewed kidneys, sauted chicken livers are other suggestions for sauces. I am sure I have mentioned before the attractiveness of a noodle ring as a setting for creamed meats, fish or vegetables; or for buttered vegetables. The boiled noodles are pressed into a ring mold, which is set in hot water to heat, and are then turned out on a hot platter ready for the filling.

Another question: "Will you send me a recipe for chicken soufflé? What is the trick in keeping it from falling?" The recipe is given today. The "trick" is using a white sauce, or soft breadcrumb formation for the beaten eggs and minced chicken, and setting the pan into hot water while baking, for a rather long time (45 minutes in a modern oven). This recipe can be varied by using other kinds of meat, fish or vegetables. Be sure plenty of seasoning is used for a soufflé, which otherwise may be too bland to be interesting.

Another letter writer asks what is the difference between brown Betty and scalloped apples. There are a dozen different ways of making this dessert. I am going to give you my favorite method today. You may prefer brown, instead of white sugar, and you may like to use soft crumbs instead of the fried bread crumbs. Of course any other fruit may be used in a recipe of this sort. I personally like a mixture of sliced bananas and apples in this recipe. I also like a combination of rhubarb and raisins. Hard sauce is usually served with this dessert, but a thinner sauce, or plain cream, is very good. As a reader has asked for a recipe for ice cream sauce I will include it today in connection with brown Betty, which, by the way, may be served hot or cold. I prefer it hot myself, especially if hard sauce is used. This sauce belongs with hot foods, although one of its forms "butter frosting" is good on cakes, which are always at least cool when they are served.

Scalloped Apples.

2 cups bread
3 tablespoons butter
4 apples
¼ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Cut bread into dice and saute with butter until brown. Peel apples and cut very thin. Dredge with sugar mixed with cinnamon. Cover bottom of baking dish with the bread, then add apples and remaining bread in alternate layers, saving a few of the crumbs to put on top. Bake one-half hour, covered, and the last fifteen minutes uncovered, in a moderate oven, 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

Chicken Soufflé.

3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
1 cup hot milk
3 eggs separated
1 cup minced chicken
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons onion juice

Melt butter, stir in flour, add milk gradually, stirring constantly until smooth. Pour gradually onto well-beaten yolks. Add minced chicken, salt and onion juice. Season to taste. Cool. Fold in stiffly beaten whites, place in a well-buttered mold. Set in a pan of hot water and bake in a moderate oven (375 degrees Fahrenheit) about forty-five minutes, or until firm.

Ice Cream Sauce.

3 tablespoons butter
1 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 egg yolks
¼ cup milk
¼ cup cream, whipped

Cream the butter, add the sugar gradually, then the vanilla and beaten egg yolks. Add the milk and cook over hot water, stirring constantly until it thickens. Remove from the fire and fold in the whipped cream.

Rocket for Wreck Victims

The crew of a sinking ship forced to take to boats will have a better chance of being found by use of a rocket recently invented in Bremen, Germany. Tests have been satisfactory. The rocket works automatically when thrown into the water, and consequently can be operated by men who are floating the waves. It rises to a great height before it throws out flares attached to a parachute, and these flares are visible for nearly two minutes.

NEED OF CENSUS TO SHOW VITAL NATIONAL FACTS

A good deal of the governmental, business and social activities of any community depends upon accurate knowledge of the number of inhabitants which compose it.

Such vital information is seriously lacking these days. A leading life insurance company discusses the subject in a statistical bulletin under the heading, "How Many Are We?" Apparently there is no reliable information regarding the population of the country as a whole or of any of the states or large cities. The depression is to blame. Formerly it was comparatively easy to make population estimates in the years between the decennial census, but today it is difficult to make even an approximate guess. The simple and usually reliable methods then employed no longer are suitable to the sudden and fundamental changes which have taken place in our population during the last few years. Economic conditions have pushed down the birthrate, the tides of immigration have reversed, and millions of people are coming and going in search of work, never settling down in one place long enough to be counted. Washington has given up and is no longer preparing the annual estimates of population.

Meanwhile business men and governmental officials are clamoring to know the population facts about the various states and cities. It is information necessary for the apportionment of representatives, taxes, water supply, schools, roads, transportation, police services and for the conduct of industrial and commercial enterprise. Only another federal census can solve the problem, and the suggestion has arisen to take one in 1935, or five years early.—St. Paul Dispatch.

More to Silence It

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Hubby—Oh, yes; it takes a lot more money to keep up a fortress.



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