What's back of the halo grand opera stars wear

natives jabbered to us in their guttural jargon (that sounded very like modern Yiddish), waving their arms and gesticulating even as they had seen their Italian rulers do, and in other ways trying to tell us of their wants. In this motley crew were many fine specimens of great value for phrenologists, for psychologists and for others of psychical bent or of physiological turn of mind. In spite of all their degradation, squalor and the inbreedings of their puny race, yet the human nature of these hybrids was not unlike that of our own; we did not understand what they said in their gargled African dialect, but we did understand that they, too, were human beings, human beings perhaps happier than we! When one sees such specimens of humanity so deprived of all that we of the western world count precious, yet so wholly happy and alive to life, it sets one to wondering if the old proverb about it being folly to be wise when ignorance is bliss is not true after all. But that is another story.

During the six years that I have lived in Europe, I have been permitted to see many sides of human nature and many sides of human life. It is a popular fallacy that "singing in grand opera" is an intensely romantic experience. Should those who so halo this calling with drops of dewy color, take up the profession as a serious life-work, they would soon find that it is a calling that demands many years of hard, hard work, disappointments by the thousands, bitter fallings at the hands of dishonest impresarios who are out for the money and in any way they can get it, impresarios who "bleed" their singers at every turn in the crooked road called "grand opera singing," all this, to say nothing about the sour contempt in which all Americans are held in all of the European countries. This, too, is a part of the afore-mentioned human nature test! But we Americans are hated in Europe, there is not another way to state the matter. I do not know how such things were "before the war," but I do know that the war has embittered all Europeans against our nation. They call us "money grabbers" (and we are!—who is not?); they call us provincial (and we are—so are they) and they make our path just as hard as they can, all to protect themselves. The other hand, should the tables be turned and it be we who were living in Europe and in the Old Continent that has suffered and endured so long, and should the "would be" from some young nation such as is the United States come in and take the bread from our mouths in a professional way, would not we resent the whole affair just as they do now? I know we would. (Just another proof of the universality of human nature).

Grand opera singing might be called the national occupation of Italy. At least when we in America speak of Italy or the Italians, the idea of grand opera comes immediately into our minds, does it not? It is true that the operas of Italy are the most tuneful in the world of music and that for centuries the Italian race has led the entire world in the production of beautiful voices. Yet does this give positive proof that the "national industry" of Italy is grand opera singing? I think not; at least no more than the "national industry" of the United States could be called the collection of interest on her war loan to Europe.

To the usual tourist traversing Europe for a hurried trip to her places of interest, the hatred which Europeans bear those from our nation is not very apparent. Of course, if such an American runs the course of usual tourist travel where English is "spoken" by all the hotel keepers, bus-drivers and other natives with whom the tourist comes into contact, our American friend gets along fine and thinks Europe one grand sweet song. But, let him settle down there in some country for definite business. Immediately his roseate aurora about the country in which he finds himself changes into the stern realization that he is not only a "foreigner" in the worst sense of the local meaning, but an intruder as well—one whose very presence is odious to the natives. He may in time learn the language well (something very hard for any American to do!) and be able to make known his wants in fluent speech, yet the twang of the American accent will inflame the inhabitants almost as much as a red cape will inflame a charging bull. Is this nature's concomitant? Would we do likewise under reversed conditions? Will the Utopian-idealized League of Nations be a success as long as the members of this league are backed by similar countries? Time may tell, but Time's answer will never be heard by our present generation.

Returning to speak particularly of Italy, Many persons have asked me during the short time I have been home on a visit to my parents in Norman: "What do you think of Mussolini? Tell us something of him." It was my pleasure to meet Mussolini and later to hear him make one of his rare, fine speeches. This speech was made upon the occasion of Milan's coming under Fascist power; this was in...
Joseph Benton describes his operatic adventures

May, 1926. I had been in Italy but a short time and did not have a complete grasp of that country's intricate but beautiful language. Mussolini talked from a balcony overlooking the fine Piazza del Duomo in Milan, and when he appeared on the balcony, the 125,000 persons standing below in the square, immediately put down their umbrellas and stood to hear the pouring rain all during the discourse of "Il Duce" (The Leader). Mussolini has a compelling voice of the most ample resonance. His personality radiates through that eloquent voice and his presence is so gripping that he overawes you as soon as he appears. He has much of what made Napoleon famous (whatever that is) and this "it" has enabled him to reorganize Italy from the chaotic country flooded with Russian Bolsheviks which it was just after the close of the war, to the steady, well-disciplined, hard-at-work nation which Italy now is. Mussolini has his faults like all the rest of us who are possessed of human nature, but he is a great man, a great organizer and a man who has benefited his nation and us all. Indeed, were it not for Mussolini and his principles of government, we who live in Italy would not otherwise be allowed to stay. But Fascism is so well-grounded in the minds of the Italians, and Mussolini's great military machine is so well-organized throughout its many branches and through the party's leaders, that should Mussolini be stabbed tomorrow, the ideals that were founded by him and which have made a New Italy, would go on and on and Rome would still be mistress of the land of the Caesars.

It may be called destiny, fate, or whatever you wish, but I personally have been very, very fortunate in my experiences and advancement in Europe. I have sung all over France, North Africa, Switzerland, in Germany, Austria, Belgium and in all the leading cities of Italy. Indeed, during the past ten months, it has been my good fortune to have sung one hundred and twenty-six performances of thirteen operas in Italy, appearing in the cities of Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Como, Parma, Bergamo, Modena, Mantova, Padova, Treviso, Molinella, Lodi, San Remo, Rome, Tivoli, Mirabello, Rovigo, Cesenelli, Faenza and Verona. For the coming year, my Milan agent, Emilio Perone, (who, incidentally, is the foremost and largest opera agent in existence) has me booked up solidly in the largest theaters of Italy.

A few of my numerous interesting experiences have been when I sang for the king and queen of Italy, the opera being La Bohème. An engraved card bearing the royal coat-of-arms with thanks penned by the queen, came to my dressing room after the performance. Another time I had to give a "commandeered" concert in the home of Hon. DeBono, then governor of Tripoli, and he was one of the original founders of the Fascist party and today is Mussolini's "right hand man." Last summer I sang during July and August in the Roman Arena of Verona in a season in which all of the singers save myself were from either La Scala or the Metropolitan, or both. The other two tenors singing in this season were Gigli in Marta, Lazaro in Isabeau. I sang in Faust (the title rôle). The last week of August just passed, I sang on two concerts as soloist with the Royal Belgian Philharmonic orchestra in Ostend, Belgium. The only other vocalists to be so honored were all world celebrities: the bass Chaliapin, the greatest of all baritones, Titta Ruffo, the soprano Tosti dal Monte and the baritone Franci of La Scala. This is one of the finest orchestras in all of Europe.

We may have learned to subdue our human nature and all that it contains, in one way or in another; yet the fact ever remains that we are all human under the skin. And the man who wins is the man who is trained and ready for the job he has undertaken. A college education may help some, or it may hinder others, in reaching the high plane where glitters the little white star to which we all would like to attain. But honest labor never soiled anyone's conscience; only through its clean endeavor can any of us hope to attain success and the victory over our individual human nature.

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AN HAWAIIAN HIATUS
THAT LED TO A LOVE
FOR LOTUS-LAND

(Continued from page 61)

other language they choose to put with it. We try to break them of the habit of course, but it is very difficult to keep from picking up bits of it for our own vocabulary.

Since people over here wonder if all these races still wear the picturesque garments of other days, Maurine Watson explained about the clothing. On the streets one sees more American clothes than any other kind. Japanese women wear a costume consisting of a kimono and a sash, while the Chinese women are often seen in pants and silk jackets. The older Hawaiian women wear Mother Hubbards.

"There is an amusing story concerning their Mother Hubbards," she says. "When the missionaries first came to the island they found the women wearing no clothes at all. The American women gave them their nightgowns as a first step toward civilization. The Hawaiian women made their first dresses and patterned them after the white women's nightgowns!"

These descriptions of the island were given to me by our three emigrants this summer during their visit home and as if to prove by action what they had expressed in words they left soon after for their southern paradise. How long they will remain they cannot tell but as we of Oklahoma watch the dreams in their eyes when they turn westward we are convinced of the charms of the Hawaiian islands and are ourselves tempted to wander into the face of the sun and the land of "Aloha Oe!"