THE WHAT AND HOW OF VOCAL CULTURE

BY

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PREFACE.

The following exercises with their analysis have been arranged for the use of my pupils, many of whom are faithfully working out the principles of my method, although my busy and changing life, with its public and private work, has often compelled me to desert them before the seed I had sown began to bear fruit. Those of them whom are teaching have long urged me togive them this aid to their work. May it in part meet the requirements!

Regarding the exercises themselves they claim no originality, but are rather an example of the "survival of the fittest," and five of them are used in the exact order taught by the late Francesco Lamperti, because they are for the purpose used unexcelled. I also use his terms "down in the breath," and "drinking tones."

I doubt not that in my enthusiastic desire to reach the understanding of pupils first of all, and save them from the stumbling-blocks I encountered in not having been given explanations, I have developed many ideas and terms that would shock the conservatism of the *vecchio maestro;* but the time spent under his instruction proved such a revelation to me when public life called his teaching into practical application, I can say that to him I owe the foundation of a school, which I have, both in public life and in teaching, yearly developed with undiminished enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which, I am glad to say, is shared by my pupils and appreciated most by

those who have passed through the hands of various teachers.

To Mme. Elpina Lamperti, daughter-in-law and assistant teacher of *il maestro*, I owe a world of patient and inspiring assistance in conquering the difficulties of the first steps, and this is everything. My gratitude to both these teachers can in no way be better expressed than in the confession that since we parted, although I formed a repertoire of thirty operas under the guidance of other teachers, my vocal development was based entirely upon the principles they taught me. Later, in my own study and teaching, I developed methods of imparting these, and also discovered many helps. Since my first articles regarding "Lowering of the Larynx" (another term for opening the throat) were printed, many warm discussions regarding the matter have been printed, and questions like these have arisen :

"Should the Larynx be Lowered?"
"Should the Larynx be Fixed?"

If understood, the matter is a very simple one, and a natural law that every muscle that contracts must be rested by relaxation. With Yankee perverseness the above questions might be answered with other questions :

"Should the Larynx be Squeezed into the Mouth, as the Majority of Singers Try to Do in Attempting High Notes?"

"Should the Mouth be Opened to its Utmost and *fixed* in that Position?"

These questions seem to the one who understands the proper uses of the throat quite as reasonable as the questions they answer.

1893. F. Roena Medini.

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LIST OF EXERCISES.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL REMARKS.

IN presenting my ideas upon the voice, a new and original method is not attempted, but only the suggestion of such a systematic course in teaching—what the old Italian masters term *placing of the voice*—as I have found both satisfactory and successful.

Grossly neglected by the average teacher in his anxiety to pander to the tastes and requirements of fashionable and indifferent pupils, its importance is often wholly lost to sight. Nor is this neglect confined to teachers of limited knowledge. I have in mind two world-renowned teachers—one in Italy, the other in Germany—who have sent to me graduates wholly lacking in the primary principles of vocal art in its highest sense. That such singers succeed for a few years does not prove them worthy of comparison with real artists, and if their experience upon the stage, united to their intelligence and conscientiousness, finally brings them

nearer to the standard of what artists should be, they do not owe it to teachers to whom for six or seven years they paid fabulous sums of money.

In the attempt to aid the seeker after truth, I have not hesitated, where I have found my own ideas expressed by men like Prof. Bunson, or Dr. Gray, to use their words with little variation, as truth will ever bear repetition.

In referring to the organs which lend themselves to voice-production, a description of which I consider necessary to be fully understood, I have greatly shortened their anatomical treatment since reading Dr. Whitfield Ward's thorough and extensive description of them in his book entitled "The Throat in its Relation to Singing"—a book that every teacher and pupil should possess. In reading Behnke and Browne's able treatise on the voice I have in no wise changed my opinions. I wish that pupils might be led to read all vocal literature, for only truth will live.

Teachers make a serious mistake in not classifying the exercises given to pupils for the development of the voice, and making pupils understand what principles each exercise is intended to develop. Regardless of the peculiar defect of a voice, the same exercises in the same manner are given to pupil after pupil. The *ultimatum* of vocal culture is the same, we know; but a teacher in-

capable of adopting examples and illustrations suitable to the voice and intellect of each pupil will rarely reach that ultimatum.

Another fault common to teachers is their drilling in one direction. Hence we find teachers whose pretensions are those of voice-building. Another, we hear, gives style or expression. Another is famous for imparting execution to the voice.

What constitutes a singer?

The perfect control of the vocal organs, that there may be put into singing sentiment and feeling in every grade of power, from the least to the greatest, and *vice versa*. One of Parepa's teachers said to me, when studying: "Do not fear that power will be lacking to your voice; that aid will come when technique becomes second nature and you abandon yourself to the sentiment of what you are singing,"—and to a certain extent he was right. We do not study to make noise, but to control the organs that produce the different grades of sound, so that we can use them all with full power, or only a part of it.

There are, however, two principles to be kept in mind by the teacher, that in teaching singing there are the *production of voice* and its *enunciation* to be taught side by side.

I speak of it as two principles, which each teacher

should speedily unite; for the majority of instructors direct the attention of the pupil to one or the other, as they may have light or heavy voices. In light voices deep production of voice is neglected, when it should be made the first principle, and thus a study of the control of the diaphragm, the costal and dorsal muscles, as motive powers, with the larynx, soft and hard-palate, lips and tongue as insulators and resonators, and the light voice, which is flexible but colorless, will gain depth, feeling and soul.

To the naturally deep voice will be brought the power of controlling a large body with graceful ease. How often we hear a voice of power that seems to choke the singer at the throat and is perfectly unmanageable, either lying smothered at the back of the throat, or else disagreeably sharp and throaty by violent use.

The union of these principles is only possible to a voice properly trained. Patti unites them, as did Pasta in olden times, and sings *Somnambula* and *Aïda* at will. Many singers have perfected themselves in one or the other, a short career being the result. One of these, in my own student days, shot up like a meteor. No one had made a more brilliant success in Europe or in America, and hearing her in London I felt it presumption to disagree with the religion her singing exemplified. It was sweet, brilliant, but alas! there was no underlying foundation, no middle voice to sustain the airy structure (in aria), and I said: "She will lose her voice in three years." She lost it in two.

The motor-power of deep breath-control had been neglected for superficial methods. Nature had supplied *coloratura;* study should have developed that in which nature had been niggardly. She should have been taught that placing of voice which would have given the true ring to her naturally brilliant voice, as well as the physical development to sustain it. To-day she is spoken of with compassion.

The artist who is a striking example in uniting these two principles in the art of Italian singing, *i.e.*, the diaphragmatic production of voice, united to enunciation, *fior di labbra*, will attack a tone whose sentiment indicates fierceness and thrills with concentrated rage, with the voice produced in the thorax and held *over* the reserve power of breath pressing *downward* upon the diaphragm, and then, suddenly letting the waves of sound come forward, enunciate at the lips a sarcasm, evident in the tone whether one understood the language or not.

Again, he makes an exclamation of victory or of joy in the same dramatic manner, and astonishes his hearers by letting it die (relaxing muscles) to an enun-

ciation of tenderness that seems to be a thousand times more difficult; or, taking a note at the lips, it gradually swells to clarion-like tones, and yet is pleasant to the ear, because the vibrations are not forced outward but roll backward to nature's sounding-boards —hard palate and resonance-chambers. Most tenors bellow or screech the same phrase, little knowing that alternating one with the other rests the voice from its dramatic tension. The art is in uniting the two. While many artists can sing all loud or all soft, it is only those versed in this method, *i.e.*, control of breathing with *fior di labbra* and enunciation, that can become perfected in both.

The artist who unites both will never be accused ot using the tremolo, which is really forced vibrations, very injurious, as well as unpleasant to the ear. The union of diaphragmatic production of voice and *fior di labbra* produces an exquisite *finesse* of vibration that is irresistible to the ear and the feelings.

Besides the control the study of these principles gives to the voice, it imparts warmth and feeling (*colore*) to voices naturally exasperatingly cold and expressionless. In one instance in my experience, the most astonishing change was made in the voice of one of my pupils in the space of ten weeks by merely the study of the positions of the tongue in the emission of voice and the

enunciation of words, gaining thereby much the same effect of diaphragmatic production. The individual disagreeable qualities of the voice invariably caused by wrong pitch of voice in speaking, and which exists in every singing-voice, was completely overcome in hers; and while earnestly studying to acquire the proper production of tones, richness and style were added to her singing by the simple application of *fior di labbra*.

CHAPTER II.

POWER OF IMAGINATION.

IT is a well-known fact that the imagination holds a great power over the mind, and when this can be turned to account, I see no reason why it should not be encouraged. All know what diverse fancies singers have regarding food or drink taken just before or while singing. Albani said apologetically to a friend one evening, during the first season at Covent Garden: "I suppose you think it a silly fancy, but I could not finish 'Somnambula' without a bowl of weak tea and toasted bread soaked in it." Salvi used to fall so that his head would be behind the wings and say, "*Per amor di Dio*, give me a mug of beer," and while the scene went on he slyly regaled himself. Some very comical scenes are the outgrowth of the search by singers for the drink or dainty bit that will quiet their nerves by imagining they have taken something that will put them in good voice. In one theatre I remember the general cry, "Punch, without fire and without

sugar," the exceptions being the buffo and the contralto, who contented themselves with a pinch of snuff from the silver snuff-box of the director passed over the prompter's head before the house filled.

Another voice-softener in demand was that of a raw egg beaten in a pint of milk, and is one of the few things that do not, like wines, dry the throat; and while the egg gives sustenance, the throat is not impeded by an unpleasant feeling of fulness in the stomach.

One evening Lombardi, our tenor, and a great favorite with the public, took it into his head to try something stronger—he had been taking part in a very long church service during the afternoon and felt very much fatigued. The opera was "Linda" Upon his entrance I joyously ran to him with, "*Carlo, Carlo,*" when to my horror, as I met him in the middle of the stage, not even the mock expression of delight met my gaze, but only a mechanical stare. I gave his hand a savage clutch, as I demanded sternly, "Potete cantare?" and was somewhat reassured by his mechanical reply that he could. As usual, we moved to the footlights, the public unconscious of the by-play, and I proceeded with my part. He began bravely; but like some dilapidated circus organs that start "The Battle Cry of Freedom," with all the vim of patriotism and then suddenly collapse, going slower and slower, so did he begin to wander.

The leader looked at me, and I shrugged my shoulders as indicative that I could not explain it. The public looked aghast, but respected my appeal for patience, with the exception of one indiscreet person who did not see, or did not understand, and gave vent to a decisive hiss. The sound reached the comprehension of Lombardi, in spite of the stupid haziness of his condition, whereupon he left the stage as if scorched. I lingered a moment, sure of the sympathy of the public toward the tenor, and that they comprehended the situation, then entered my dressing-room, next his own. The stupid mood had suddenly passed, for that one sign of disapproval had brought him to his senses, and he was like a mad man in his wrath that anyone had dared to hiss him. Nor could he be persuaded to sing again till a conciliatory note regarding the *accident* had been put in one of the papers by subscribers of the theatre. It was his first and last attempt to gain borrowed strength from wine.

This imagination, which seems inseparable from the artistic character, must be conceded by the teacher through the course of study intended to fit the singer for the utmost control of his powers. Yet, let the pupil be taught that the best schooling is to overcome fancies, and school the nerves to rigid control.

CHAPTER III.

EMISSION OF THE VOICE.

SINGING, now universally taught, is seldom perfected, although both teacher and pupil earnestly strive toward that end; and this is because the teacher either does not know his business, or does not possess the rare faculty of adapting illustrations to the understanding of the student. There are a few people, whom nature has endowed with peculiar gifts of voice and their careless acceptance, who sing without thought of how it is done.

The art of singing cannot be acquired from books any more than practical business experience can. What I write here is meant as a book of reference for those who have had practical illustrations in tone-production from the living voice, as handed down from teacher to pupil, each of whom has received his knowledge from great singers in his time.

The foundation of tone depends upon the steady *reserve* of breath in the lowest cavities of the lungs, and the voice must be produced far enough back to be over this reserve breath.

Enunciation of the voice must be at the lips, called by the Italians *fior di labbra*. To do this, the voice produced in the cavity behind the uvula spreads into the front cavity of the mouth, striking against the hard-palate (roof of the mouth), and is emitted by distinct enunciation of the words.

In the effort to pronounce words distinctly, care must be taken to dwell on the vowels, to avoid stiffening the muscles of lips, cheeks, or jaws in pronouncing the consonants, as there is danger of doing, for consonants shape words, vowels are tone-conductors. For example, avoid closing the teeth upon the word *should*, forgetting to unprison the *ou*, upon which the purity of tone depends.

For this reason, the Italian language is not only easier to sing, but prepares the pupil, by its study, to apply the *fior di labbra* to the pronunciation of other languages. If the production of the voice so far back be not united with frontal enunciation, the voice will be guttural, or, to use a homely phrase, will sound as if one were singing with a mouth full of hot mush. The Italian language necessitates pronunciation at the tip

of the tongue, and our study is to pronounce without interruption of the full, round tone.

Take a phrase sung on one note, "The Lord is in His holy temple." The tone should be continuous, like that of the long, steady bowing of the same note on a violin or a bass-viol, the vowels carrying the tone, and the consonants being uttered with as little movement of tongue and lips as possible. In this example "is" and "His" are the stumbling-blocks. Care should be taken not to dwell long enough upon the "s" in either word to give a hissing sound, or to impede the rotundity of the sound we are producing; also, do not anticipate the consonant. In the word "Lord," hold the sound of "o" and only change the position of the mouth to pronounce "rd" when obliged to do so.

If the pupil will watch for the defects of his pronunciation, he will invariably discover them to be caused in great part by changing the mouth for the consonant while pronouncing the vowel. Example: Where the "whe" is produced directly behind the front teeth, to add the remainder of the word, the tongue is drawn by the stylo-glossus muscle upward and backward, and when the "r" is trilled, the tip of the tongue turns back quickly, touching the hard-palate and falling quickly to place again. In doing this, care must be taken that the sides of the tongue do not rest against

the upper teeth. To understand the anatomy of those organs which are necessary to perfect production of voice, we must study the formation of the muscles of the larynx, tongue, nasal organs, vocal cords, lungs, diaphragm, epiglottis, as well as the muscles of lips and cheeks.

The breath under control, we wish to place the voice —as I before stated—in such a manner that the waves of tone will be living sounds, thrilling with feeling, expressive of every sentiment and emotion. This we do by restraining the breath steadily, and then spinning into tones whose vibrations are as perceptible as the minute strands woven into a perfect thread by the spider, and to the educated ear the perfection of such tone is apparent. In enunciating such tones, the tongue has more to do with the sonorousness with which it is produced than we are prone to credit it. Sing a line with the tongue perfectly flat, and you will hear a trivial or childish tone; hollow the tongue at the tip, as if to make a cup in the chin, and the same phrase will take a round, sonorous and dignified sound, providing, however, that the tongue is well lowered at the back. This can be practiced at first by yawning; then omit the drawing back of the breath as in yawning, and lower the tongue in the same manner. At first, yawning will follow; but once get the muscles to respond to

the will, and it will become second nature. This study of the tongue and distinctness of articulation gives style as well as what is termed color to the singing.

Malvezzi, one of the famous tenors of Italy, at seventy years of age, again appeared before the public and shamed all young tenors with his inimitable and artistic rendering of "Di Quella Pira" in "Trovatore." His voice was as fresh and clear as it had ever been.

It fell to my lot one evening to sing with him the trio from "I Lombardi," and his exquisite rendition of the *legato* in his dying words nearly unfitted me for my own part, real tears falling on the face of the dying man. Fortunately, the basso, also an old artist, and conscious of my tendency to be too much in earnest, having more than once pulled my coat-sleeve, so to speak, when on the stage with me, made a grimace over the shoulders of the dying man and recalled me from that state of exaltation into which grand music, passionate singing and intense acting are prone to lead me.

My role for the week having been *Somnambula*, I had declared myself incapable of singing anything so dramatic as "I Lombardi;" so, after responding to a hearty encore and the dead man had become a very hungry living one behind the scenes, he kindly and approvingly said, "I told you so," and added: "It was a

woman who gave me the key to both the use and economy of my voice after I had been on the stage twelve years, and my fame dated from that time. She said, 'Think of the enunciation of your voice; the production is what it should be; if the music presents difficulties, talk it. Declaim the words, and the voice will take care of itself.'"

CHAPTER IV.

BREATHING.

Art of Bringing the Lower Muscles into Use.

THE celebrated singer, Pacciarotti, wrote in his memoirs: "*Chi sa ben respirari e sillebare sapia ben cantare.*" And it is a truth proved by the study and practice of all great artists: "Who knows how to breathe and how to enunciate, knows how to sing well."

Many people are frightened at the mention of the diaphragm in connection with breathing, not understanding that it is a partition between the lungs, or rather the thorax in which the lungs are situated, which moves downward to make room for the lungs when these are filled to their utmost capacity. The singer, in understanding its government, possesses a reserve power of breath, which, properly used, gives power and breadth and quality to the voice unknown to those incapable of making use of these muscles.

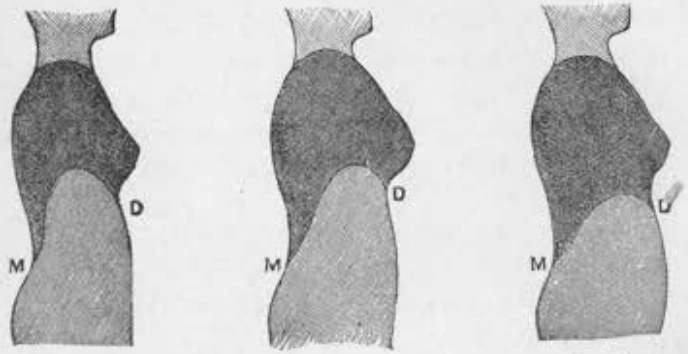


FIG. I. FIG. II. FIG. III.

DESCRIPTION OF DIAPHRAGM, ILLUSTRATING THE ADDED CAPACITY OF PROPER BREATHING.

M—D, Line Marking Diaphragm.

FIG. I.—Showing Diaphragm when Lungs are Empty.

FIG. II.—The Diaphragm after Clavicular or Collar-Bone Breathing. The lungs have no room for expansion.

FIG. III.—Correct Position after a Deep Breath. The diaphragm is lowered, giving room for lung-expansion.

The diaphragm is a muscular, fibrous partition placed obliquely between the thorax and the abdomen, forming the floor of the former and the roof of the latter. The height of the diaphragm is constantly varying during respiration, the muscles being carried upward or

downward. After a forced expiration the right arch rises on a level in front with the fourth costal cartilage; at the side, with the fifth, sixth, and seventh ribs; and behind, with the eighth rib, the left arch being usually one or two ribs' breadth below the level of the right one. In a forced inspiration it descends from one to two inches. Its slope would then be represented by a line drawn from the ensiform cartilage toward the tenth rib.

To illustrate the philosophy of filling the lower part of the lungs without effort, let us take for an illustration the glass tube, with rubber bulb attached, used for filling the stylographic pen, which is in such common use that all must be familiar with it. By pressure upon the rubber ball at the top of the tube, a vacuum is produced, permitting it to spring back to place. With the glass point placed in ink, this vacuum necessarily fills itself with air through suction,—this suction drawing after it and into the tube the ink. Pressing the rubber ball slowly, the ink is ejected steadily; compress it forcibly, and the opposite is at once to be seen.

The use of the dorsal and abdominal organs can be compared to the above illustration. Fix the attention upon that part of the abdominal muscles above the hip-bones, and slowly and steadily expand the waist in this manner; stand perfectly erect and well balanced;

place the hands on the hips, with the thumbs on the small of the back, and fingers on the abdominal muscles; grasp them tightly, *i.e.*, try to press in the abdomen with the fingers, and at the same time, by an internal effort in the use of the muscles, make such an effort as would be required to burst the hands off in the emission of the vowel-sounds. The mere act of enlarging the waist with the mouth naturally closed, or very slightly open, will draw the breath where it should be, providing these directions are closely followed.

If I say to a student, "Take a long breath," he immediately takes, by forced suction, such an amount of air into the upper part of his lungs that a sensation is caused not unlike that of suffocation, and he must let much of it escape to feel comfortable. The chest must remain in a normal condition. Many have laughed to see dear old Lamperti draw a rattan across the shoulders of a pupil, or stand behind a singer and hold down unruly shoulders that would rise in taking a breath or ascending a scale; but he knew the importance of it and so did the pupil in time, and, I hope, understood it so well as to be able to impart it to others when necessary.

If I say, "Take a deep breath," the pupil is much less liable to make the error before referred to, and if he follows the above directions he will surely be successful; but this mere act of getting the deep breath is the most simple thing to learn. The next thing is to control the muscles (dorsal and intercostal)—those muscles, in fact, lying above the diaphragm, and taking care that the effort be made at the sides and back, in order to hold them extended, or permit them gradually to return to place. (Notice that the diaphragm is higher in front than at the back.) This is the manner of breathing properly, intended by nature, and perverted by hurtful modes of dressing.

The next and yet more difficult task to learn is to bring this reserve power of breath to act upon the voice easily and gracefully; and this calls out all the powers of a teacher to impress upon a pupil its importance, and to teach it properly. It would be folly to attempt to give illustrations that would assist a teacher in this.

First, he must have made it a study for years; must not only understand it theoretically, but practically, and be able to illustrate his meaning in a hundred different ways. Great harm has been already done by ignorance on the part of teachers, and consequently a great hue and cry is raised against this mode of breathing. Let teachers copy artists who study all their lines; let them go to those who understand it and frankly confess their ignorance, instead of ruining the voice and health of pupils by attempting to work out an idea that

has merely suggested itself to them. A physician in Boston told me that he had treated persons who had actually been taught to use the muscles below the diaphragm to such an extent that the intestines were pressed against the spine until inflammation and all sorts of diseases were engendered. The injury to women through this ignorant instruction is often serious. Hence, beware of terms that may mislead rather than express your true meaning. Physicians themselves are often prone, from the terms used, to lead people astray, *i.e.*, in the use of the term "abdominal" in such a general way; for, although in filling the lungs completely the lungs press the diaphragm downward and the stomach is lowered, producing a slight motion of the abdomen, no direct effort of the abdomen below the hips must ever be made, but only those muscles at what we call the "pit of the stomach."

Sensitiveness of Singers.

Why, ask unmusical people, do so many jealousies exist among singers? Why are they always quarreling?

There is, I think, underlying this fact a theory seldom thought of. If you will notice, in other walks of life it is always the person who doubts himself that

complains of being slighted in society, cut in the street, or treated coldly by friends. It is always the person who doubts the stability of his standing in society who tremblingly asks, at each turn, not the question, "Am I doing right?" but the weaker query, "What will people say?"

Singers, no matter what their standing in the art world, no matter how valiantly they may carry the banner announcing themselves world-renowned, famous, or *egregia cantatori*, are never, at heart, contented with all that they do; are ever seeking to overtake the standard at which their taste has arrived, and like to-morrow, that never comes, they fail to reach it. The very study of music, and especially the lyric stage, constantly develops the sensibilities and emotions. This will readily be understood by Americans and English people, whose earliest education is that of self-control of the most rigid kind. It is bad taste to yield to impulses of surprise, sudden laughter, and the many minor emotions of life which they have been taught to avoid, and, later, turning to the study of music and its dramatic expression, they find themselves actually undoing what they previously took pride in forcing upon themselves.

The study of music involves the facility of abandoning self to the expression of every grade of emotion;

and, if successful, it requires a strong will-power not to permit it to enter private life, not to be surprised into sudden expression of emotions. Singers, therefore, may be excusable if they possess many weak points; that is, if they have not philosophical forethought to guard against an exhibition of them.

The average singer is a little like the Irishwoman who abuses her husband to her heart's content because he beats her; but if you denounce him, she will turn on you furiously with: "If he bates me, it's for me good; and whose wife should he bate if not his own!" The singer, only too conscious of his own deficiencies, is jealously watching for indications of the same opinion from others, and naturally takes up the gauntlet, whether intended for him or not. Over-sensitive, he is suspicious of criticism before it is offered; and is more to be pitied for over-conscientiousness and undue sensitiveness than blamed. Mapleson once said of a young artist: "She will never be a great singer. She is too yielding—has not temper enough." He meant that, instead of standing up for her rights, she would take her grievances to heart and mourn over them till unfitted for her duties. In other words, she needed to harden herself to the practical "breakers" that meet an artist behind the scenes.

Annie Louise Cary evinced her sound philosophy

when she remarked that she found it spoiled her voice to get angry. It also showed that her heart was kindly and sensitive, and that angry words hurt her as much as the person to whom they were spoken.

Phillipi, an Italian tenor, said to me in Italy: "Kellogg is una demonia." Upon inquiry, I found that Phillipi based his assertion upon the fact that Miss Kellogg had learned to stand up for her rights, without permitting herself at all to be soft-hearted in the matter. It was one of the secrets of her success.

"My child," said the manager of the Royal Theatre at Malta to a nearly heart-broken young artist, "if you expect to follow the golden rule behind the scenes, and then cry your eyes out because you find it is neither appreciated nor understood, let me warn you that you will certainly die of grief. You must consider that sensitiveness must be saved for the higher interpretation of your art, and replace it by a mask of stern indifference in meeting the petty jealousies of singers whose education of heart has been neglected or who are ignorant of the common courtesies of life."

CHAPTER V.

ECONOMY OF BREATH.

NO one can get the voice placed on the breath according to this method without, at the same time, having learned to economize breath. Hence, the two principles are taught together. But a few hints may be of service in recalling the words of the teacher.

Never attack a tone by explosion or by coughing it out, but let the stroke of the glottis be backward and inward; and, when holding a note, draw it inward, never push it outward. This has the advantage of economizing breath, and at the same time opening the throat, while the pushing will certainly close it.

Lamperti always said, "Feel that you are drinking a glass of water." Whether this illustration would reach the understanding of all depends upon the example given to the pupil by the voice of the teacher.

In ascending the scale, open the throat a little wider as you ascend, but let it be always downward, as if to enlarge the larynx and the windpipe, and in drinking the tone, so to speak, let it be drawn into the roof of the mouth; otherwise, the soft-palate will be raised and the tones be pinched and thin, which is their natural

tendency. Therefore, an effort must be made to make them as round and full as possible at a high pitch.

If the scale is at the highest pitch, drink the tone into the roof of the mouth, and round the note by lowering the tongue into the lower jaw. If I said lower the chin, you would lower the bones of the jaw, thus closing the throat. The idea is to hollow the tongue, as a contrasting point of vibration from the roof of the mouth (hard-palate), by using the genio-hyoglossus; when properly done, the singer will feel a ball of vibrating air in the front of the mouth, over which he has complete control. This ball of air will vary, according to the vowels and the consonants used, from the shape of an egg, as in pronouncing *el* (the smaller end being in the roof of the mouth), to a round shape.

Elocution and music are closely allied. One aids the other. I am convinced that there would be fewer affections of the throat and fewer defects of voice and delivery with public speakers and singers, if production of voice were properly taught and learned; not necessarily in the sense of being finished, but enough to enable a person to use his voice properly.

While sounds of letters can be produced by making the effort below the diaphragm, the great secret of placing the voice on the breath, so to speak, in continuous vowel-sounds, can be obtained only by years of

practice. How few of our public speakers ever accomplish this! Once obtained in vocal training, it easily can be applied to the speaking-voice. In attempting to make the effort from the lower muscles while the chest is quiescent, the fatal error of exploding the sounds or coughing them out is generally made, and this is sure to produce bronchitis, if not graver and even irremediable affections of the lungs.

If any one is in doubt regarding the propriety of using the breath from the lower part of the lungs, sending it downward upon the diaphragm to rebound through the windpipe, the larynx, and the mouth, let him study himself in moments of strong emotion and he will discover speedily that all the strong affections of the human mind are manifested throughout the dorsal and abdominal region. Let him be startled enough to scream, and feel the sensation which is expressed so often even when no scream is uttered, by the exclamation, "Oh! how my heart jumped!" No one can scream from the throat alone.

The voice is weak or strong in proportion to the greater or smaller number of organs and muscles that are brought into action. If one uses the upper part of the chest only, his voice will be weak; if he uses the whole body, as he should do, even when not using full power of voice, it will be more resonant. Hence, to

strengthen a weak voice, the student must practice, in the production of tone, using all of the abdominal and dorsal nerves and muscles. He should use them in breathing and economizing the breath when walking or talking; when mounting a hill or running up stairs. Since I have mentioned running up stairs, let me add a word in relation to it. Never run up stairs, in the usual acceptation of the term. It produces explosive breathing, injurious to the lungs, and violent circulation, more hurtful than beneficial. If you are in haste and must go rapidly, glide upward; that is, give an impulse to the body without impelling yourself along as in running on level ground. Where impelling power endures, even when the impulse has ceased, in gliding let the impulse be less forcible, but continuous and steady; or, what will be more easily comprehended, hasten the walking-gait to the rapidity of running, without the spring of the body—the throwing forward of a running-gait,—which produces violent circulation.

CHAPTER VI.

LONG LIFE OF SINGERS AND SPEAKERS.

PUBLIC singers and speakers ought to live longer and enjoy better health than other persons. If they do not it is because they subject themselves to mental violence; for everything that tends to discompose or agitate the mind—whether it be deep sorrow, rage, fear, envy, revenge, love, despair,—in short, whatever acts violently on our mental faculties, tends to injure the health and shorten life. Singers and speakers have in their favor what singing and speaking, if properly done, must necessarily bring: Free use of a large quantity of air, which throws off, in the exercise of expanding the lungs to the fullest extent, all tendency to pulmonary disease; increased lung capacity; and perfect purification of the blood. The use of the whole body insures free circulation, and the general health benefits thereby.

Against long life, on the other hand, the speaker or the lyric singer has nervous tension. If he has not learned that all the passions he personates are, after all, merely acting, he will drain his system of nervous power that he can ill afford to lose. When Ristori

realized this, she was wise enough to overcome it, and did it in a simple and somewhat amusing manner. When the audience in the San Carlos, at Naples, were weeping over her great impersonation of the trials of *Marie Stuart*, she would turn toward the wings and lightly perform a noiseless whistle, not because she failed to feel what she was acting, but to recall herself from its reality and to save herself from excess of emotion. Adelaide Neilson frequently fainted at the end of an emotional passage, and, recently, Sara Bernhardt has yielded more than once to this violent mental strain.

One of my teachers, who had been upon the boards of the Scala fifteen years, confided to me one phrase in *Linda* for three successive lesson-days, and as many times as he dared, made repetitions of it to teach me to do it mechanically. I at first rebelled. It seemed to me sacrilege to count one, two three, four, with mechanical movements accompanying the action. The scene was *Linda* awakening to reason upon hearing the tenor's voice as he sang the phrase, "*A Consolar.*" And yet I had sung it in public many times before I could reach the climax without reeling and nearly fainting in earnest. The lessons he gave me, however, impressed upon my mind the necessity of overcoming the tendency to abandon myself so completely to feeling, and suggested the means to overcome it.

CHAPTER VII.

HEAT VERSUS COLD.

THE amateur singer or artist, just entering upon public life, is often thrown into a panic of fear that engagements cannot be filled owing to the feeling that he has taken cold; and he at once begins the application of every remedy suggested by numerous friends. Nine times out of ten he is suffering from what, it is true, may lead to a cold, if it is not left to take care of itself instead of being aggravated to still greater sensitiveness, thus rendering the patient more prone to change of temperature. What he is really suffering from is a slight congestion, brought on by nervousness, overheat and rush of blood to the head and throat.

What artist has not felt that he must before singing, debar himself from everything that would send the blood to the head; he cannot read anything so interesting that he will become absorbed in it; must lie down only long enough to catch a short and healthful nap; must avoid all food that heats the blood, such as preserves, highly-spiced food, etc.; must not eat incontinently, but only such food as is nourishing and easily digested, and

in the winter time must avoid sitting near the fire to toast one side of the body while the other is freezing; this is the surest way to bring on congestion enough in the throat and head to convince the singer that he has cold, and is frequently followed by relaxed throat. The Italians use, in such cases, a cooling drink made of cream of tartar, magnesia and lemon.

Do not resort to troches, cough drops and other remedies, to enable you to sing. Even though they may enable you to use your voice for the time being, the organs are working under the influence of stimulants, and the reaction will be the more severe. There is a greater and only remedy, and an artist can tell how severe it is and how difficult to take in proper quantities; its name is Patience. Take only such remedies as a reliable physician shall prescribe, and then wait patiently. There are only three epochs in a severe cold that a person can risk singing in and not suffer for it afterward. One is when the cold begins with what is called cold in the head, affecting the nasal organs by a peculiar sensitiveness of the membrane, much the same as it is affected by the taking of snuff; the voice is sometimes singularly clear and brilliant at this time, and the vocal cords and larynx not being affected, singing does no harm. The next is the same thing that often occurs at the last stage of a cold, which, having first attacked

the lungs and bronchial tubes, finishes by going to the head. The only other time that a person should attempt to sing, and it should be under the judicious direction of the teacher, is when a severe bronchial cold of long duration leaves the membrane of the throat, and even of the nostrils, devoid of proper vibratory power, a sort of stiffness; proper and careful exercise will gradually wear this off, where forced singing would not only leave a roughness, but strain the vocal cords, and possibly bring on paralysis of one of them.

Therefore, whatever the haste of the singer, the ambition to accomplish much work in little time, console yourself with the thought that sweet flowers are long in growing—it is the weed that springs up in a night, and rest, rest, rest.

That "necessity is the mother of invention," and "desperate diseases require desperate remedies," are two maxims that singers in public life are sure to become acquainted with sooner or later.

One of our American singers—once with Strakosch—learned them very early in her career. She went to Ravenna, Italy, to make her debut in "Rigoletto." Her appearance was a signal success and the engagement lengthened itself into double the time for which she had contracted.

One evening, suffering from a severe cold, she courageously went to her duties, knowing the serious inconvenience it must cause the manager if she failed to appear. She was greeted with the usual warm demonstrations, and perhaps under the excitement and the pleasure of feeling herself a favorite, the cold was forgotten, and she was enabled to do nearly all the opera without being inconvenienced, when suddenly great hoarseness appeared, and it was with difficulty that she finished the opera. The manager became alarmed—not for her or for the evening in question, but the next night was his tenor's benefit, and he was promised the golden harvest that a crowded house would bring. What could be done without a *Gilda?* At his wits' end, he hunted up two peasant women, one of them a famous nurse, and scarcely had the prima donna reached home, when the manager appeared and ordered her to bed, and the two brown-faced, sturdy women put her through a course of treatment few prima donnas would care to experience. Scalding hot water was brought in a great tub and into it were thrown huge skeins of yarn. These were wrung out quickly and as quickly wound about the extremities of the patient, who could hardly refrain from screams. It is needless to add that the next night she sang like a lark.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENUNCIATION.

ENUNCIATION is the utterance of the elements of language, in such combination that syllables and words are formed, distinguishable from the tones of the voice. Perfect enunciation consists in the accurate formation of the sounds of the letters by right motions and positions of the organs, aided by sufficient impulse to impress those elements distinctly upon the ear. Combining them with the ideas we wish to convey is the music of speech, the poetry of sound.

One of the most beneficial exercises, to add this art to that of vocalizing, is to seek a continuation of sound, like the long drawing of a bow upon the strings of a violin or bass viol, while pronouncing the words firmly, in such a manner that their sounds will not be disturbed, and the words are not enunciated in a choppy way, always endeavoring to make them—the sense being equal—legato, full and sweet. As an example, I will quote the phrase, "The Lord is in His holy temple," to be sung on one note, say G on the second line of the staff.

And here I make a slight digression to call the student's attention to the difference between singing this phrase and reciting it; or, rather, to point out that the diapason of the voice taught by elocutionists is also evident in singing this phrase upon one note; *i. e.*, the accent, or added stress. For example, the word "Lord" receives an involuntary stress in the diapason of speaking, called light notes, which would divide the phrase like this, the pitch beginning on three: "The (3) Lord (5) is (5) in (6) His (3) holy (4, 3) temple (3)." Only a highly-trained ear could distinguish the difference in the diapason in the singing-voice, but it exists and must not be confounded with pitch. In teaching, the use of the lower muscles is commonly called into practice, and is a truth that goes parallel with the principle of keeping the throat perfectly quiet, as also the chest, in mounting the scale, the difference being merely that of greater impulse of the diaphragm and the muscles surrounding it.

For example, in mounting an octave, place the hands upon the hips, the thumbs on the back muscles, the forefingers on the front, and in taking the note press downward and outward in the effort to burst off the belt formed by the hands. The pitch changes because of a greater pressure in sending the breath to the diaphragm, there to rebound to the windpipe and larynx;

but there is no reaching upward of the throat as if the desired sound was hung just above our heads and we must reach for it. This very effort made from the larynx would destroy the freedom of the passage of air through it.

Music is a refined and elegant species of elocution, hence, each step taken in elocution upon this principle will advance us in music. Vocalizing with words, and the practice of enunciating the twenty-eight consonants, is of great importance, as they must not be permitted to encroach upon the vocalizing uses of the vowels, but only give to the material the proper form.

In pronouncing letters or syllables it is not the outward position of the mouth that is essential, but the inward, *i. e.*, the position of the tongue, principally in its relation to the teeth and hard-palate.

Notes lose their character and beauty by closing the glottis abruptly, instead of holding it steadily upon the vowel; therefore, never anticipate the consonant, *i. e.*, do not change the mouth preparatory to the enunciation of the consonant, but hold the mouth immovable on the vowel-sound as long as it is to be sounded, for we vocalize with vowel-sounds. In singing with words, care should be taken to keep this principle in view, making the vowel the primary element of the word, and the consonant the secondary. In speaking or sing

ing diphthongs—there are four: long *i* in *isle; oi* in *oil;* the pure or long sound of *u* in *lure*, and *ou* in *our*, which include the same sounds under the forms of long *y* in *rhyme;* of *oy* in *coy;* of *ew* in *pew*, and *ow* in *how*, and called pure because they are heard—only the radical fulness of the sound should be prolonged.

SIMS REEVES'S CAPRICES.

"Birds that can sing and won't sing ought to be made to sing," is the proverb often quoted to nervous singers when, whether in the mood or the spirit of song, they are expected to rival the birds of the air. A good story is told where the tables were turned upon the indiscreet person who quoted it in public.

Sims Reeves, who, since we can remember, has been notable for disappointing audiences, was, it seems, little better in the beginning of his career. When fulfilling an engagement at La Scala, he one evening sent word to the impresario, after his four o'clock dinner, that he could not sing that evening. The manager insisted that his illness was feigned, and swore by all the saints in the calendar, that he *must* sing; but our tenor remained firm. He could bear the useless wrath of the manager better than risk himself to the hisses of the capricious and exacting Milanese, who may excuse

discrepancies in other theatres, but when under the roof of La Scala, "*e tutt' altra coso.*" Finally, he was arrested and ignominiously led upon the stage by two officers of the law, who looked more ashamed than the culprit. He was accustomed to the footlights; they were dazed by them. Arrived at the front of the stage, some one shouted out the proverb, when the prisoner folded his arms, smiled at the audience, and replied in very good Italian:

"You may lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

The Milanese, notable for their ready wit, lost sight of their annoyance in the appreciation of the reply. A round of applause was the result, and the audience dispersed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PALATE.

THE palate forms the roof of the mouth; it consists of two portions: The hard-palate in front, better known as the roof of the mouth, and the soft-palate behind.

The soft-palate is a movable fold, suspended from the posterior border of the hard-palate and forming an incomplete septum between the mouth and the pharynx.

Few realize the importance of the palate in singing; indeed, most people consider the word palate to refer only to the conical or grape-shaped pendant, the uvula.

The uvula varies in size in different people, being in some healthy throats so small that it disappears in singing very high notes. Then the soft-palate is raised against the posterior nares. Again, it is broad and short; again, it is often so long that in suffering from a slight relaxation of the muscles, it will drop so low as to cause a slight irritation producing a cough. Cases

have been known when patients imagined themselves suffering from consumption; in such a case an expert surgeon can take off a small portion, and the patient be saved great annoyance. He must take care to understand that it is a mistake to take off so much that the natural use of the uvula, that of guarding the soft-palate and the nasal passages, is interfered with, as it surely would be if the uvula were cut too short.

Singers often make a mistake, when singing very high notes, in exaggerating the raising of the soft-palate, thus tiring the muscles of the throat and rendering it impossible to enunciate upon the high notes. Instead, they should direct the force of sound to the roof of the mouth, where the breath, being vocalized, will take palpable form and can be distinctly felt. Letters presenting extreme difficulty when raising the soft-palate by direct action of the will, assist the voice when enunciated in the front of the mouth. For example, the Italian *i* (pronounced *ee*), although the mouth is nearly closed, loses its unpleasant qualities when properly pronounced.

The Italian *e* (pronounced like *a* in *hay*), preceded by a consonant, is one of the most useful letters in the production of high notes, and was adopted by Malibran as a daily exercise in singing the scales. Nothing is more characteristic of her conscientious study than the

eagerness with which, in company with Marini (the world-renowned basso thirty-five years ago), she used to practice exercises every morning, comparing notes and lending each other new ideas. His voice was of such wonderful power and resonance that he was obliged to choose certain positions on the stage to avoid the returning sound; in other words, not to be deafened by his own voice.

As characteristic of the sensitiveness of great singers and the knowledge of their deficiencies, the following is in place: Ronconi and Marini were rehearsing "I Puritani" for La Scala, and the grand voice of Marini seemed to shake the very foundations of the vast theatre in the thrilling duet:

"Suoni la tromba e intrepido
In pregnero da forte."

Ronconi, obliged to repeat the same phrase, forgetful that his own fame equalled that of his companion, lost heart completely. "What can I do," he said, while tears coursed down his cheeks, "when I am placed in such direct contrast to a voice like that." Marini laughed him out of his fears, showing him where his artistic effects of declamation made up for great volume of voice; and such a duet was never before heard as was rendered by these two that same evening.

Voices frequently come to the teacher so throaty in quality that the first lessons can be directed only to teaching them to produce a sound of any description without force of throat. Sometimes this can be accomplished by explaining the deep production of the voice; sometimes the evil is remedied for the time being by directing the pupil's attention to the mere pronouncing of syllables, leaving the voice to round itself by the position of the tongue in relation to the roof of the mouth. To avoid throatiness we must produce the voice below the larynx, and must, in the emission of the voice, see that the voice-box, the larynx, is perfectly free, open, and natural, to admit of the voice passing through it to the roof of the mouth.

The following exercise is very useful in learning to do this: Pronounce *noon* with a sonorous sound, dwelling upon *n* which will form the word in the roof of the mouth, and direct the continuous sound of the vowels (produced diaphragmatically) to the hard-palate. Practice this *n* with other vowel-sounds, as *nan*, *nun*, *neen*.

Another exercise, which I have found successful in overcoming obstinate cases of throatiness when all else failed, in that the pupil could perhaps get production of voice but could not combine with it enunciation, is one that I hesitate to give here, for it should never be practiced or even attempted without the guidance of a

competent teacher, and should never be used haphazardly or as an experiment; for in such a case the teacher would not be likely to understand its exact application nor distinguish the difference between right and wrong application. It is the following: Place the tip of the tongue on the roof of the mouth, directly back of the teeth, and hum, taking care that the quality imitate that of *oo* in *noon*, and that it be produced deep, while directed to the roof of the mouth. Always understand that the stroke of the glottis should be made *inwardly*, drinking in the sound instead, as is usually done, of pushing it outward. Sing this, or rather hum it, taking the greatest care that, while the lips are nearly closed, the throat is open, and the tongue lowered exactly as in singing with the mouth open; *i. e.*, open the mouth *inside* at all times, even when the lips are tightly closed. Let this humming-exercise be performed on two notes, as if for a preparatory trill. After sufficient practice, gradually open the mouth, using the syllable *ah*, producing the tone in the same manner and giving the sound with only the change of tongue and lips. The teacher must distinguish the difference. Never let it be done with throat closed, tongue raised, so that the sound will be pressed against the soft-palate, or let the nasal passages become contracted, thus producing nasal tones. When properly done, this exercise will *cure* all tendency to nasal tones.

Some teachers—and very eminent ones—insist upon pupils vocalizing with the sound of *a* in *far*, the only natural sound in our language (the others being modifications of it); for when able to do it properly, all other sounds can be vocalized. While I agree with them that it is an essential thing to conquer this greatest difficulty, I must add that if there is a way of accomplishing it without falling into bad habits, which its direct use often engenders, it is well to resort to it. *A* as in *far* opens throat and mouth; but if the pupil has not yet conquered the deep production of voice, it will strike the throat, instead of coming from the impulse of the diaphragm or from enunciation, because no consonant gives it form. Preceded by *l* this latter effect can be produced. The shades of tone-quality are as numerous as the birds of the air, and no written rules can do more than hint at the ways of overcoming defects.

Only a teacher possessed of thorough knowledge, of enthusiastic love for his art, and of creative genius ought to be trusted with this jewel, the voice. In such a one's hands it is like the diamond in the hands of the polisher. It does not derive from him the purity of its water, but he brings it forth in all its beauty to the eyes of the world. How much rarer a jewel is the human voice than any precious stone, and who would entrust a rare gem to the hand of an unskilful workman? Beware, then, of uneducated teachers, for the voice once injured—what art can rebuild it?

Repeating again that there are two principles or, rather, two ends to be reached in the cultivation of the voice, production and emission; and having considered the organs which lend themselves to its accomplishment, their formation and capabilities, what are the results? The breath feeds the lungs, the lungs send it against the diaphragm, and the diaphragm sends it to the sounding-board, the hard-palate. Whether the point toward which sound be directed be varied a little backward or forward, lowered toward the tongue or pressed more closely to the sounding-board, depends upon the formation of the vocal organs, the size of tonsils, and the natural faulty inclinations of the pupil. Some need to have the voice made more grave to avoid sharpness; some more bright to avoid guttural, thick production, owing to large tonsils. Some of these defects may be remedied entirely by syllabication and enunciation; with others, the pupil needs to be taught to enunciate a trifle back, owing to a habit of sharp, pinched pronunciation between the front teeth, arising from sacrificing every other grace of pronunciation to that of distinctness. Each of these points, to the utmost nicety, can be taught by a teacher able to explain the meaning by illustrations that will aid the imagination of the pupil to apply the principle.

CHAPTER X.

THE LARYNX, LUNGS, AND PHARYNX.

THE larynx is the organ of voice placed at the upper part of the air-passage. It is composed of cartilages, which are connected by ligaments, and moved by numerous muscles; the interior is lined by mucous membrane.

The cartilages are nine in number, three single and three pairs: Thyroid, cricoid, epiglottis, two arytenoid, two cornicula laryngis, two cuneiform.

The thyroid (a shield) is the largest cartilage of the larynx, consisting of two aloe, each of which forms a side of the larynx, and when joined to its fellow forms a triangle whose apex is what is commonly called the "Adam's apple," more noticeable in males than in females, owing to a glandular body that is apt to cover it in the latter sex.

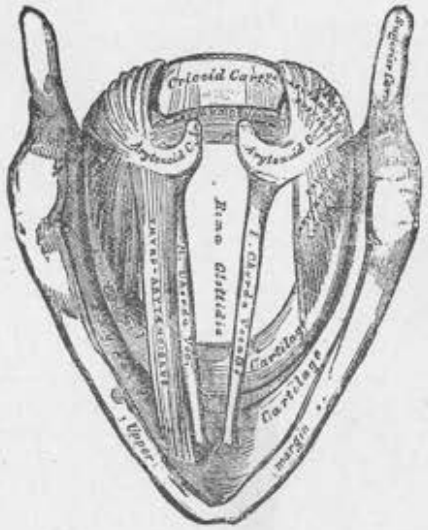
THE CRICOID CARTILAGE.

The cricoid cartilage, so named from its resemblance to a signet-ring—the Greek word itself meaning ring—is located directly beneath the box formed by the two thyroids, with the most important part, that which represents the signet, behind.

The arytenoids—the Greek for pitcher—are cartilages so named from their resemblance, when brought together, to the mouth of a pitcher. These cartilages are two small triangular bodies placed on the top of the cricoid in the depressions noticeable in the upper part of the thick or signet portion of this bone, and are of great importance in vocal production, because they are moved at will, and because the vocal cords are attached to them. Hence, tension and relaxation of the vocal cords depend greatly upon them, and in studying these cartilages perhaps the student can understand why he should feel, in producing that tension necessary for high notes, that the tension is produced not by raising the "Adam's apple," but by lowering the arytenoid cartilages, or, in simple phraseology, should feel that the larynx itself is lowered at the back, almost as if it were capable of tipping backward.

The epiglottis is a thin lamella of fibro-cartilage, placed behind the tongue in front of the superior opening of the larynx. During respiration its direction is vertically upward; but when the larynx is drawn up

beneath the base of the tongue during deglutition, it is carried downward and backward, so as to completely close the opening of the larynx.



VIEW OF LARYNX FROM ABOVE, SHOWING VOCAL CORDS, ENLARGED CARTILAGES AND MUSCLES.

The muscles of the larynx, in their influence in separating and drawing together the vocal cords, are not sufficiently under direct will-power, except in our natural tendency toward voice-production, to need, like those of the tongue, lengthy description here.

Training the muscles of the throat by *reaching* for notes frequently may be avoided by lowering the larynx in ascending the scale. The result is that the upper notes are round; when, by permitting the larynx to rise it contracts, the pupil reaches for the notes, and they are small and pinched till the scale has this effect. This explains the expression sometimes used, "You feel that you are going *down* instead of up." In other words, in ascending a scale the notes in the upper part of the scale are produced by greater tension of the vocal cords; but always let that tension come from the movement of the arytenoid cartilages, spoken of in the beginning of this chapter. In this manner the vocal cords are not forced to approximate, and the tension is accomplished steadily; the air is not forced through the glottis (the opening formed between the vocal cords when approximated preparatory to singing), but is permitted only to escape as it is vocalized.

Always remember that when you wish to produce a grave sound in song, and, indeed, in speech, lower the *larynx* (which swells the windpipe, elongates and enlarges the vocal cords) and *form* the voice as *low* as possible in the larynx, for the vocal cords are thus relaxed as in low notes, and a deeper tone is the result. The third sound of *a*, as in *all*, will give this position, as will also the sound of *o*, in *bought*, *sought*, etc.

THE LUNGS.

The lungs are the essential organs of respiration and are two in number, supported by the heart. The apex forms a tapering cone, which extends into the root of the neck about an inch and a half above the level of the first rib. The base is broad concave, and rests upon the convex surface of the diaphragm. Its circumference is thin, and fits into the space between the lower ribs and the costal attachment of the diaphragm, extending lower down externally and behind than in front.

THE PHARYNX.

The pharynx is that part of the alimentary canal which is placed behind the nose, mouth, and larynx. It is a musculo-membranous sac, of about four and one-half inches in length.

CHAPTER XI.

POSITION OF THE TONGUE.

THERE are persons who have sung for years who neither appreciate the importance of the position of the tongue in singing, nor are they able to govern its muscles.

The muscles of the tongue are: Genio-hyo-glossi, hyo-glossi, palato-glossi, linguales, stylo-glossi.

The movements of the tongue are numerous and complicated, but can be understood by carefully considering the directions of the fibres of its muscles.

The genio-hyo-glossi, by means of their posterior and inferior fibres, draw upward the hyoid-bone, bringing it and the base of the tongue forward so as to protrude the apex of the tongue from the mouth. The anterior fibres draw the tongue back into the mouth. The whole length of these two muscles, acting along the middle line of the tongue, draw it downward, so as to make it concave from side to side, forming a channel along which fluids may pass toward the pharynx, as in sucking. The hyo-glossi muscles draw down the

sides of the tongue, so as to render it convex from side to side.

The linguales, by drawing downward the centre and the apex of the tongue, render it convex from before backward. The palato-glossi draw the base of the tongue upward, and the stylo-glossi upward and backward.

The movements which interest us most are those acting upon the tongue to make it concave from side to side, forming not only a channel for food to pass but also for sound, and those drawing the base of the tongue downward, movements which must become second nature, and the same as opening the mouth in speaking and singing. If we are able to govern the tongue, keeping it well down, and to keep the throat well open, the mouth will take care of itself.

Another movement of the tongue is essential to the sounding of tones in their emission upon words, spoken of in the chapter on "Enunciation," and part of which I will repeat here in another form.

Take the line

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Sing it first with the tongue simply flattened from side to side. The tone is trivial, and very likely, in endeavoring to render the words distinct, they are disagreeably staccato, *i. e.*, each syllable separated from its fellow. Repeat it in the following manner, and you will readily perceive the difference: Open the mouth naturally. It is a mistake to think that the mouth must be opened to the widest extent. Pronounce the words naturally, and to give resonance to them draw the tongue downward at the tip, sucking the tone into the roof of the mouth. You will feel that the mouth is opened at the very front in the shape of an egg, the tip drawn into the roof of the mouth by lowering the tip of the tongue (with the genio-hyo-glossi muscles), and sucking the sound into the roof of the mouth just behind the front teeth. On different words this ball of sound will vary from egg to bell shape, the word "whom" rendering it decidedly round, but the principle is the same; the *i* in the word "blessings" makes the decided *point* of an egg in the roof of the mouth.

TONGUE AND MUSCLES.

We often hear one say when failing to enunciate rapidly, "my tongue gets thick." Like the muscles of the limbs, use renders them flexible, while it develops and strengthens them; therefore, it is never amiss to practice what are called muscle-breakers. These are particularly useful to those inclined to lisp. They

must always be memorized, and in reciting them rapidly let the *tip* of the tongue enunciate the words, *i. e.*, do not permit the *sides* of the tongue to strike the teeth, as nothing is more detrimental to pure tones in singing.

It is for this reason that the Italian language is so beneficial in preparing the voice for singing all other languages. The nature of the language is such that every word can be pronounced at the very tip of the tongue, there being no combination of consonant-sounds like *sh* in *should*, or *j* in *jar*, which close the teeth tightly together. *Questo* is one of the Italian words upon which an English-speaking person will reveal this fault, by pronouncing it between the molar teeth; that is, will anticipate the action of the *s* upon the *que*; while the Italian, or one properly versed in the nicety of its pronunciation, will not permit the sound to go further back than the bicuspids or eye-teeth, by holding the *e* (pronounced *eh*) at the very *tip* of the tongue.

Do not confound these rules with those for the avoidance of lisping. Lisping arises by getting the tongue between the teeth, and by not being able to hollow the tongue at the tip in words that cause the tip of the tongue to be pressed against the teeth. Lisping can easily be overcome, and those who consider it "too

cunning for anything," and encourage rather than criticise it, possess excessively bad taste.

EXAMPLES FOR PRACTICE.

"Theophilus Thistle, the successful thistle sifter, in sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles thro' the thick of his thumb; if, then, Theophilus Thistle, the successful thistle sifter, in sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles thro' the thick of *his* thumb, see that *thou* in sifting a sieve full of unsifted thistles, dost not thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of *thy* thumb. Success to the successful thistle sifter, who does not thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his *tongue!*"

"Thou wreath'd'st and muzzl'd'st the far-fetch'd ox, and impris-on'd'st him in the volcanic Mexican mountain of Pop-o-cat-a-petl in Co-ti-pax-i."

"Thou prob'd'st my rack'd ribs."

"Thou trift'd'st with his acts, that thou black'n'st and contaminated'st with his filched character."

"Thou lov'd'st the elves when thou heard'st and quick'n'st my heart's tuneful harps."

"Thou wagg'st thy prop'd-up head, because thou thrust'd'st three hundred and thirty-three thistles thro' the thick of that thumb that thou cur'd'st of the barb'd shafts."

"Peter Prickle Prandle picked three pecks of prickly pears from three prickly prangly pear trees; if, then, Peter Prickle Prandle picked three pecks of prickly pears from three prickly prangly pear trees, where are the three pecks of prickly pears that Peter Prickle Prandle picked from the three prickly prangly pear trees? Success to the successful prickly prangly pear picker!"

CHAPTER XII.

STRISCIANDO OR SLURRING.

EXPRESSION in singing can never be given by artificial effects; who does not *feel* cannot interpret emotions to others. Do not understand by this that the uneducated singer, actress, or speaker can make others weep simply because they themselves cry. If glaring faults are not overcome, the feeling on the part of the performer only renders them ludicrous.

Two of the common faults in mock expression are those of pathos expressed by slurring from note to note, which reaches the educated ear in a whine. It is a defect that will rapidly pervade the entire range of voice, the student being incapable of attacking a note without the undertone of a third or a fifth.

Another defect is that of permitting the voice to tremble on certain notes in attempting to give them vibration. Vibration and expression can be added only when the voice is properly produced; and, while some voices are what we call placed more readily than others, it is always a question of time, and depends

upon the pupil's powers of concentration in bringing reason to the study of cause and effect. Vibration, often erroneously confounded with tremolo, is not a forcible movement of the vocal cords. A tremolo is a forced emission of breath causing heavy vibrations, hence fewer and more distinct to the ear. Another disagreeable effect of this force of breath is the trembling of the membranes of the pharynx and soft-palate, which contains no beauty and is ruinous to the voice. Pure vibrations of a note are so fine and so closely knit together, that they carry an idea of living, passionate tones, and when properly produced never lead to tremolo.

What will produce this rare and exquisite vibration? Steady use of breath as far back and as deep as possible. In vocalizing, lend the breath unwillingly; be a spendthrift in all else, but niggardly in throwing away the breath. Throw a pebble violently upon the water and it is disturbed into large, broken circles; drop a smaller one quietly and the eddies are fine and even; so is it with explosive and violent use of breath.

Drink the breath, and do not have an over-supply in the lungs. Be natural in art. Remember, as I have said elsewhere, to take the stroke of the glottis backward and upward; this also will economize the breath. In singing a phrase, say to yourself, "I must save my

breath for the last note of this phrase," and then take care to end that note before the full supply of breath is used. To do this, add two *mental* diminishing notes that the mouth may not close; the breath ends abruptly on that last note, as if caught in a spring trap.

Again, since singers, through nervousness, indigestion or physical fatigue, may find themselves less capable of governing the breath at one time than at another, do not think it necessary to always take the breath in the same place. In perfect phrasing, all depends upon carrying the breath, but there are little touches of art that will make phrasing acceptable, though shorter than usually required.

It is never acceptable to take the breath at the beginning of a measure, unless there be a pause in the versification. Let it rather precede the last note of the preceding measure. Again, when a phrase presents itself where great power is required at the close and the control of the breath is more sure by taking breath in the middle of the line, prepare the ear for a natural breathing-point by posing the voice lingeringly on the word previous to that where the breath is to be taken, and the phrasing will not be broken thereby. This is something that can only be fully demonstrated by the living voice.

CHAPTER XIII.

ACCENT.

WE must divide accent, besides its minor divisions, into two great classes: The first, applied to the *musical* rhythm, essential not only for proper and true musical interpretation, but as an inestimable aid in overcoming the difficulties encountered in singing rapid passages; the second, applied to the enunciation or what I may call the *elocutionary* part of singing. In versification we can easily perceive that a syllable requiring greater stress than the rhythm admits, will destroy the symmetry of the line, owing to the effort made by the vocal powers and the time taken to recover themselves for another effort. So it is in the technical delivery of vocal passages, they must be rhythmical, the accent regular and exact, else the vocal organs themselves will rebel. This is supposed only to exist in the musical requirements, not especially effecting their production and the delivery of them. This is a mistake. For example, if a pupil sings a scale of eight notes and mentally anticipates the last one, he

may succeed, after a fashion, in striking each note distinctly; but if he attempts to sing two octaves, he will stumble and the throat close and elude control before the last note is reached. If he divides the scale into regular intervals, giving the voice no more impulse than to carry it to the next, he will keep the muscles unstrained and hence unfatigued for continued efforts. I have known students who had no natural *agilita* (flexibility) in the voice, to obtain no mean degree of perfection by great attention to accent, taking care, if, for instance, the scale be divided into groups of four, to make the last three notes with less power of voice, for if you will observe in running, we do not move rapidly by heavy footsteps. When the impulse is given, we are carried along after the impulse ceases. Continuous impulse would impede our progress as well as produce fatigue.

Remember that explosion of tones calls the lungs and thorax into use; that is, the effort is made simply at the upper part of the lungs, which is hurtful to health and voice. Besides, hoarseness is caused thereby, from the fact that without the impulse below the midriff there is an expansion of chest that does not admit of natural production of sound, and some of the breath escapes *un*vocalized, chafing the surface of the epiglottis and the back part of the mouth, while the

muscles become swollen, producing what is called hoarseness.

The air in the lungs may be compared to a rubber ball thrown upon the floor, only in this instance the floor is not wholly inflexible. The air in the lungs is thrown upon the diaphragm (the floor) to rebound, passing to the windpipe and through the larynx where it is converted into vowel-sounds, which, as they pass on, are, by the combined influences of glottis, epiglottis, palate, tongue, lips and nose, emitted in words.

In studying, seek a clear conception of the principles of your work, by talking over the ideas presented with your teacher; and by comparing the idea you have received, the teacher will be enabled to know whether you fully understand or whether you are only working in the dark.

While the voice produces, it is the ear that criticises, and the reason that distinguishes the mechanical difference, even before the ear discerns the niceties required by the instructor.

It is not the number of exercises sung in a lesson, but the manner of singing them, and the acquisition of correct and efficient rules, with the ability to make such application of them as to render them habits, that constitutes art in its highest sense.

Therefore, if you desire to gain complete control of

your vocal powers, take one principle or combination of principles and practice until completely mastered.

Do not become dependent upon book knowledge, nor think book or teacher can make a singer of you. Accept the ideas of your teacher and the means suggested for adopting them, and then remember that these ideas must not be imitated merely, they must become a part of yourself; for you will never succeed in reaching perfection, till, added to art, your own individuality is stamped upon all you do, and you forget that it was ever taught you. Then read, listen, imitate with this object in view. Dedicate a leaf of your vocal exercises to a list of your deficiencies, and add to them any new ideas you may have discovered. Read these very carefully each time you practice; they will assist you in overcoming your faults. Let me say, for comfort and encouragement, that some defects are not reached by directly attacking them. They may be the outgrowth or effect of others; hence, study cause and effect, exercising great patience until the cause be removed. Yet it is not enough to read and think of these things. Actual practice joined with earnest thought is necessary, and then you will be rewarded by good results.

One of the dangers of reading and thinking about any art or science is that one's taste becomes de-

veloped so far in advance of the power of execution that the student feels disgusted with slow progress and despairs of success. Success never came to anyone without drudgery, and often only after a blind dependence upon others for the first principles, even when reading and observation have prepared for much that is to come. It is an epoch of study much like that of having learned to strike chords and even play a melody upon a guitar without having learned to tune its strings, and we feel much as if turned back to the primer in undertaking a direct and systematic study of the instrument.

No one can become a really good singer by singing from a book, because what is thus acquired is more from thought than from feeling; hence it has less of freedom in it, and we are, from necessity, more or less constrained and mechanical. In comparing sounds, be guided by the ear and not by sight in the science of acoustics.

The infinite shades given to the voice after the drudgery of placing it (that is, getting under complete control all muscles and nerves that affect it) are feeling and passion, which give rise to the individual qualities of voice.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHANGING POSITION OF MOUTH AND THROAT.

A DEADLY enemy to perfect vocalization and enunciation is the idea that the throat is a sort of step-ladder, and that *do* is on the lowest round, while we must move around to find succeeding notes; hence a syllable must be abandoned or mutilated in leaping from a middle round of the ladder to one of the higher ones.

When the pupil learns that the very syllable abandoned, providing it is not a combination of consonants that close the throat, will insure the beauty of the note to be taken; when he understands that the worst thing he can do is to prepare himself to reach for a note, he will have accomplished much. How ardently have I wished that all notes could be written upon one line, instead of impressing the singer that he must reach up for the high notes, or settle down for the lower. Here I find great use in the idea of lowering the larynx and attempting to take the higher note just where the lower was taken, *i. e.*, keeping the

throat perfectly immovable while the proper pitch is obtained by a longer column of air, then let the larynx return to place. The act of lowering the larynx acts as a lever, and throws the waves of tone into the roof of the mouth at the front (hard) palate. This rendering is far less fatiguing, more vibratory, and less wearing on the vocal cords, because no strain or over-tension of vocal cords can possibly follow if it is rightly done.

Another practice that greatly facilitates vocalizing without changing the position of the throat for consecutive tones, is that of studying a fine legato of the notes to be sung. Make the syllables meet each other, not by slurring but by bringing down the higher note to the one just sung, *i. e.*, taking the *mi* with the throat in the same position it had in singing *do*. To avoid slurring, take a mental sound of *mi* before striking it, as treated of in the chapter on Slurring. With this practice rightly performed under the guidance of a teacher, the pupil will be astonished to find how high the voice can be carried without changing the position of the throat, or making any exertion in singing, noting that the difference of pitch is always owing to the velocity or to the length of the column of air, properly directed to the roof of the mouth. Therefore, in the endeavor to hold the position of the larynx unchanged,

do not fix the muscles and stop the tone at its upper edge. Its fulness depends upon the larynx being held open; its pitch is dependent upon the formed sound reaching the highest point of vibration, the roof of the mouth.

The soft-palate is frequently erroneously used for the production of the very high notes, but its direct connection with the muscles of the larynx renders it productive of evil, both to the vocal cords and to the nerves of the throat, as there is danger of straining them. To test the difference, make an ascending scale of staccato notes to the highest limit of the voice upon *ah*, which, without lowering the larynx, will carry it to the soft-palate. Repeat it two or three times, but not to bring fatigue. Now do the same with the letters *ste* (pronounced *stay*), holding the last sound *ai* well in the front part of the roof of the mouth. Providing you have not previously tired the throat by improper or long continued singing, and open the mouth without changing the *s* enunciation of the syllable, while drawing the tones to the point occupied by the syllable *ste*, you will readily understand how much less fatiguing such production of high tones becomes, and how much easier they are to reach. Singers make a mistake in changing a vowel in order to reach the desired tone. If done properly it will *insure* the tone,

except in rare cases in which the previous word ends with a consonant that gives them no time to prepare for its perfect enunciation, or where the note requires great dramatic force, and the word is one which does not lend itself to the direct impulse of the lower muscles. Take, for example, "to me." It is more difficult to place "me" in the roof of the mouth following "to" than when preceded by "for," from the fact that in prolonging the vowel-sound of "to" there is a tendency to bring the lower jaw forward, while to take the "me," or any other word the vowel of which is to be held in the roof of the mouth, the singer must avoid letting the jaw slip forward. Rather draw it backward, *not* downward; the muscles are lowered, not the jaw-bone, while in opening the mouth in the emission of a very high note, let him imagine the voice to be opened by opening the mouth from the upper jaw, as this will avoid a tension of the muscles of the chin and jaw, and its influence on the voice be heard distinctly.

Remember that each note sung is the index of the one to follow; *i. e.*, if well placed and the breath is kept steady in taking the next note, the second will retain the qualities of the first; while if the breath be all expended on the first, the second will be uncertain and without vibration. Usually, the uneducated

singer, fearful of the result in attacking a high note, prepares himself for a mighty effort, the sure way of forcing the tone and either closing the throat, or taking a note devoid of all music by its forced character.

PART II.

CHAPTER XV.

BREATH-EXERCISES AND TESTS OF DIAPHRAGM.

DO not think that exercises are a preliminary practice to be abandoned after a few months. They are to be sung till all muscles of the throat, tongue and body (for in singing we use the diaphragmatic, the costal and the dorsal muscles) are developed, and afterward to keep the voice in condition. Practice must be continued as long as you have breath in your lungs or voice in your body. Determine in your own mind what your chief defects are—throatiness, breathlessness, nasal quality, flat instead of round tones, triviality rather than nobility of tone,—and discover in each exercise its special application to eradicate one or all of these defects. There are few finished singers that have not had to contend with every possible fault. Remember that to sing, the voice, like a violin, must be tuned.

A first lesson is naturally devoted to breathing. Frequently, much to their surprise, pupils are not

asked to sing at all, and they go away from the lesson puzzled as to whether the teacher knows anything about the magnificence of the voice they have brought with them.

There are few people unable at a first trial to expand the waist, and when told to do so with the hands pressed against the sides, can easily understand that the expansion thus produced and held while counting ten is what we call a deep breath or diaphragmatic breathing. Take the breath in that way a second time, *i. e.*, expand the waist without thought of taking breath, and softly sing *ah*, holding it till the waist has returned not only to the position held before the expansion, but is smaller, the waist having contracted to supply the long pull on the breath. Now you are given the idea of using the breath from the lowest recesses of the lungs, or from the diaphragm.

Take the breath again in the same manner, remembering that the ribs are expanding rather than that the air is rushing into the mouth. This time say *Hoh! Hah! Heh!* Placing the hand at the waist or pit of the stomach, it will be felt to move inward from the hand. This contraction is an impulse of the diaphragm to throw the air out of the lower part of the lungs with moderate violence. It should be done with

a backward movement at the throat (as one yawns), bringing the vocal cords in opposition to the column of air sent from the diaphragm.

Again, take deep breath and say *Halt! Hold!* in a voice of command, taking care to choose a low pitch. Again, the hand at the waist will feel a stronger, a more violent contraction.

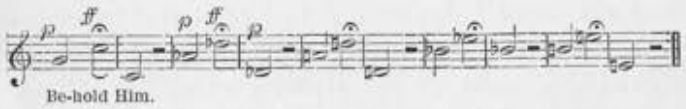
To use this pressure of the diaphragm at will, and in music whose natural change of expressions calls for crescendos from the softest to the most forcible tones, requires long and careful training of all the muscles connected with the human voice; and when a pupil can produce the extremes, *i. e.*, dramatic tones or *leggero* (light) tones, there is sometimes a long struggle to unite these. But this need be no cause for discouragement. No one ever sang well without first singing poorly; and if perfection of art is to be attained, it must be by gaining a little at a time. One or two other exercises, somewhat violent, to convince the pupil that the voice can be strengthened only by the use of the diaphragm, and then we shall turn to the study of quality of tone rather than quantity, which will come later.

Pronounce the word *moon*, dwelling somewhat upon the *m*, and noticing the resonant chambers it discovers above the upper lip and back of the nose; then pro-

nounce *oo* with sonorousness, imitating a deep bass voice as much as possible. You will find it, too, comes from the diaphragm. Next try *noon*, and the *n* is found to use the frontal facial cavities, while *oo* goes down to the very "boots," as before.

Now sing

Exercise I.

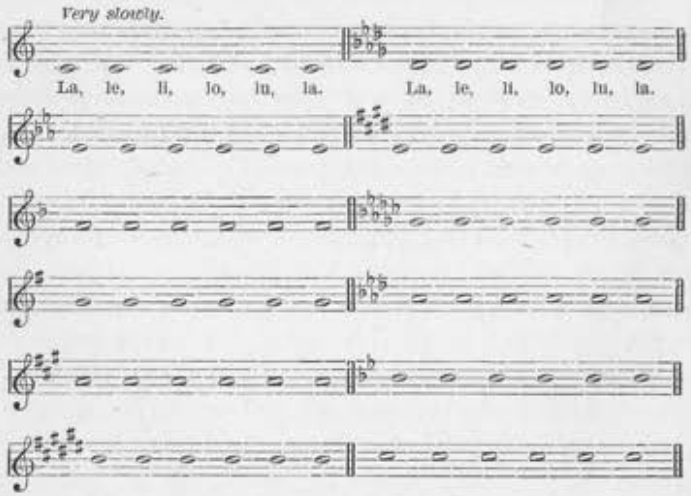


taking care to speak rather than to sing the first syllable, and quickly settle *down* for the second syllable, which you hold by suspending the breath, *i. e.*, holding it back instead of pushing it out. In settling down you kept the throat from rising above the position it naturally uses in speaking, and therefore it remained open. In enunciating it forcibly, the contraction at waist, as in *halt*, must be felt. Keep in mind rather the thought of going down than up, to avoid reaching for the note.

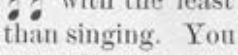
The following exercises, from I. to VI., are religiously practiced each day by the greatest *prime donne* of the world. In beginning your daily practice, consider, as they do, that for half an hour you have

neither breath nor voice and under no consideration attempt to sing with voice, but concentrate the mind upon softness of attack, the tone beginning in the following exercise exactly at the point where *l* is enunciated, exercising the breath merely by suspension, as in the first breath-exercise, necessitating its renewal. This strengthens the contracting and expanding muscles of the diaphragm as well as the dorsal (back) and costal (side) muscles, and is the beginning of breath-control.

Exercise II.



Without doubt, in your first attempt the breath escaped. You attacked the tone with what might be described as a swelling preparation of the throat, and you used on the low tones a sound called by some teachers a chest-tone, but which was (as most so-called chest-tones are) a pure and unalloyed, not-to-be-mistaken throat-tone. First of all, use no chest-tones, whether we are trying to use the throat without any rigidity of its muscles or not. When the time comes to oppose the column of air from above, we shall have learned to do it without any noise or misuse of the throat.

Let us now consider the attack, *i.e.*, begin without the disagreeable *noise* called the stroke of the glottis. We choose the letter *l* to aid us in this natural manner of beginning, as it guides the tone to the front of the mouth. Now to find what we want, strike the tip of the tongue against the upper teeth in rapid enunciation of *la*  with the least possible sound, as if speaking rather than singing. You find that you have not used the throat. Now begin the *la* at the front of the mouth, and, drawing the tongue slowly and steadily back from the *l*, sing the vowel *a* with the same soft tone and with a drawing backward or drinking movement, instead of pushing it forward. The drinking or yawning movement lowers tongue and larynx, while it

opens the throat, and the vocal cords are carried downward upon the breath coming from the lungs.

Let us consider some of the faults the student develops in trying to do this exercise. One is inclined to stiffen the tongue-muscles at the back of the mouth, and a hollow, guttural sound is the result, as if the tongue were too big for the mouth.

To counteract this, make the tongue-pressure at the tip, especially upon *le* and *li*. Begin again, get the soft tone started with *l*, then draw downward from the upper teeth to the tip of tongue, which, with muscles pressed downward behind teeth, leaves a hollow that enlarges the resonance-chamber thus formed at front of mouth. Now begin again, simply, softly, *la*, *le*, *li*, enunciating *le* and *li* with the muscles at tip of tongue lowered with a firmness that will strengthen them like steel. Take care that you do not press the *e* against the teeth till it wheezes, but notice that if well drawn downward, as if it were an elastic string with a revolving button at the upper end, a pure, resonant sound can be made as well upon that difficult vowel as upon *a*.

Pronounce or sing them again, and notice that the tongue has at its back three grades of roundness: *La* has a low position, curved into a hollow along its length; it is slightly raised for *le*, while the tip-pres-

sure is increased; for *li* its middle nearly touches the roof of the mouth, while the tip of the tongue takes its utmost pressure.

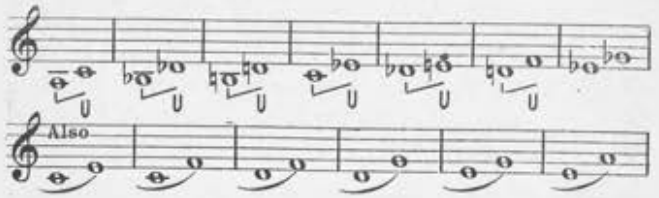
If the pupil has a stubborn throatiness, various exercises must be invented to coax the voice away from its enemy, the larynx, which, since it is the voice-box, is much like people who are their own worst enemy. Find a note among those of the upper register where the singer unconsciously takes a head-tone. Get him to imitate it in the lower tones, and finally his own ear will learn to distinguish the difference. Often the humming-exercises will enable them to take proper tones by keeping in mind that each note must be begun exactly as was the humming-tone. Remember that throatiness is a stiffening of the muscles of the larynx, obstructing the breath instead of permitting it to pass through. In time, the pupil will learn that this opposition is a useful and necessary art, but that the breath will be guided through to the proper sounding-boards, and that the contraction and relaxation of the muscles are done with no cracking of the cordage.

Do not attempt other exercises when practicing alone, till the attack is properly learned, till the *l* can be enunciated with humming-tone, drawing back the tongue, or rather down and back, into lower jaw, instead of toward throat, leaving plenty of room at the

front of mouth for the vibration of sound, and keeping ever the same flowing, soft, smooth sound, avoiding a grating tone. Practice this always as number one. In time, other principles can be added and practiced, using the same exercise.

Having practiced the first exercise carefully and rendered the breath steady, let us go to an exercise intended especially to make the throat elastic, and to enable the pupil consciously to open and close the throat—a matter that often remains one of Egyptian darkness to singers for a life-time. Accident may produce that result, but no intelligent adjustment of the muscles aided them.

Exercise III.

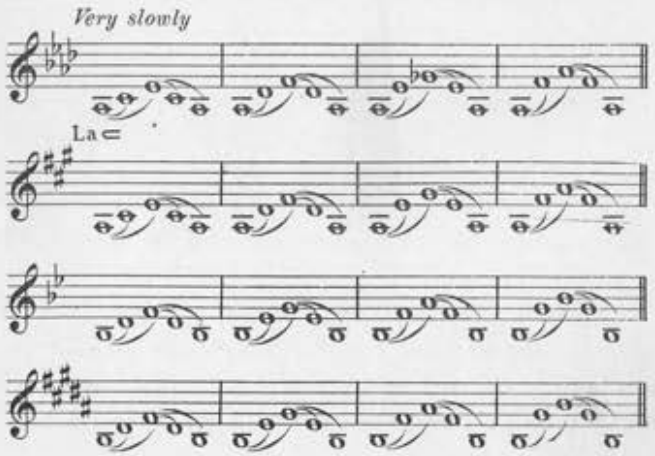


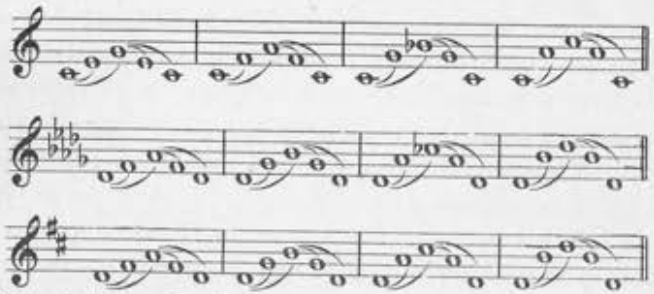
Begin the first note softly, lower the larynx as if yawning, except that the force is kept toward the middle of the throat to narrow it a little, in order not to use muscles that produce a real yawn, and let the

breath move to the pitch. Do not move up and forward because the pitch is a minor third above; such a movement *closes* throat. Another aid is to concentrate the mind upon the first note, and in making the second sing it or draw it a trifle further back of the point at which the first was felt. Three or four intervals, a third, a fourth, any interval easily sung with the above method of doing them, will suffice to open the throat, provided no breath-pressure has been used.

Exercise IV.

⊂ Strike note with backward impulse thus keeping throat open.





Note that lines drawing upper notes down to first are to remind the pupil of going down, using contracting muscles of larynx; those drawn up to third note, to keep notes up in head while muscles of larynx relax.

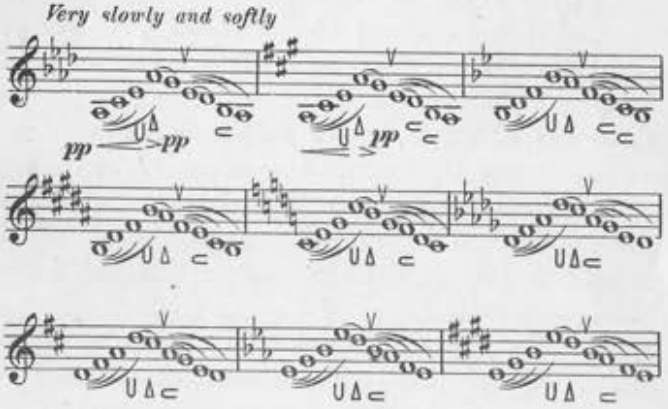
Begin Ex. IV. simply, draw the second note down to the first with the same slight lowering of the larynx (thus exercising the contracting muscles), and for the third note, let the downward pressure be decisive. The breath, unimpeded, will move *over* the edge of the larynx, which otherwise catches it with a throaty or thread-like, grating sound. Move from the third note to the fourth, taking care to *release* the larynx from its pressure (which exercises the relaxing muscles) for the breath, which has been thrown high enough to generate into tone at the required pitch. This will produce the tones descending, while the muscles are relaxing. As we transpose the exercise into semitones, a greater pressure of breath is needful for the higher note.

Take care that the movement backward and downward (to open throat) precedes the contraction at diaphragm (waist-line), in order that the throat be opened gradually in advance of the increasing column of air being forced upward by the diaphragm; also as C, third space, and D are reached, take care to guide or lead the tone forward toward hard-palate (roof of mouth) to take advantage of the head-cavities as resonance-chambers.

The movement of a tone as the organs which influence it are moved, can be likened to the rotation of a wheel which, dragged along the road, loses usefulness and freedom, producing a scraping noise. Properly moving on its axle, the point marked moves down and back to rotate, finally, considerably in front of the point at which it neared the ground before. The downward and backward movement we make with the throat, brings not only a strong pressure of the vocal cords against the breath, but makes the circuit that, like a lever, throws the tone with certainty and well guided to its proper pitch, to the front of the mouth. Also note that the archer whose arrow is sent farthest uses it according to the backward movement of the cord, which speeds it on its way.

Exercise V.

U Down on breath
Δ Exhaust breath & relax throat preparatory for new breath
⊂ Open throat with backward stroke in taking note



Begin this exercise as the last was begun, but take care to hold or suspend breath (as you drink tone) upon the first three notes, *going down on breath* on the fourth note; *i. e.*, lower the larynx firmly and contract at pit of stomach, which sends, by the action of the diaphragm, a strong column of air to the vocal cords, where it is generated into tone. Do not let this force of air be wasted. Continue to drink tone, or suspend breath, and as soon as the fourth tone is firmly sounded, begin to relax the muscles, move to

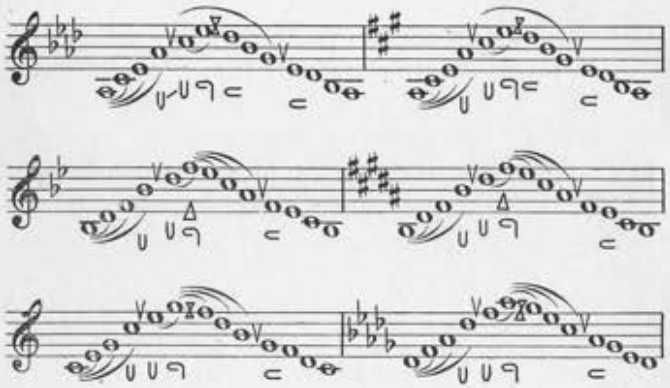
the next note, and permit the breath that has been held so long to be used up, that the lungs may be perfectly empty in taking new breath; for, although the pupil should study to reserve breath in singing a phrase, as if it contained one more note, the art of expelling breath while singing is quite as necessary an accomplishment

After the fifth note, take a deep breath, always by the expansion of the waist. One might say, feel that the lower part of the body is a sponge, capable of absorbing the breath as the ribs rise and expand. This avoids the sob through the throat, which is both hurtful and disagreeable.

Continue the exercise with lungs only partially filled, taking care that in descending each note copies the upper note, with rather a smiling face, to keep it in the head-cavities and a backward stroke of the palate to prevent the throat from closing, as it is apt to do after taking breath or as breath gives out. As the singer moves down the scale and is conscious that the tone is getting near the throat, let the larynx be held well down from under it, as if attempting to carry and hold it against the spine.

Exercise VI.

┐Sign indicating that note is held forward by pressure forward of upper jaw.
X Sign indicating that muscles of larynx are to be relaxed. Especial rule — to relax easily never place on note as much pressure as is possible.



This exercise—the most difficult to do correctly, and one of the best to equalize the voice, carry the breath, and govern the throat—is begun simply, as in other legato exercises, taking care to begin without lowering larynx, but rather smilingly, so as to bring the tone well forward. Then lower the throat as the tone ascends and is inclined to reach up. Remember that there must not be undue tension in lowering the larynx, but only sufficient to keep it at the level of

the speaking-voice, when talking at a low pitch, and let breath-pressure do the rest. Let a frequent thought be, "Do this or that with less effort; be natural."

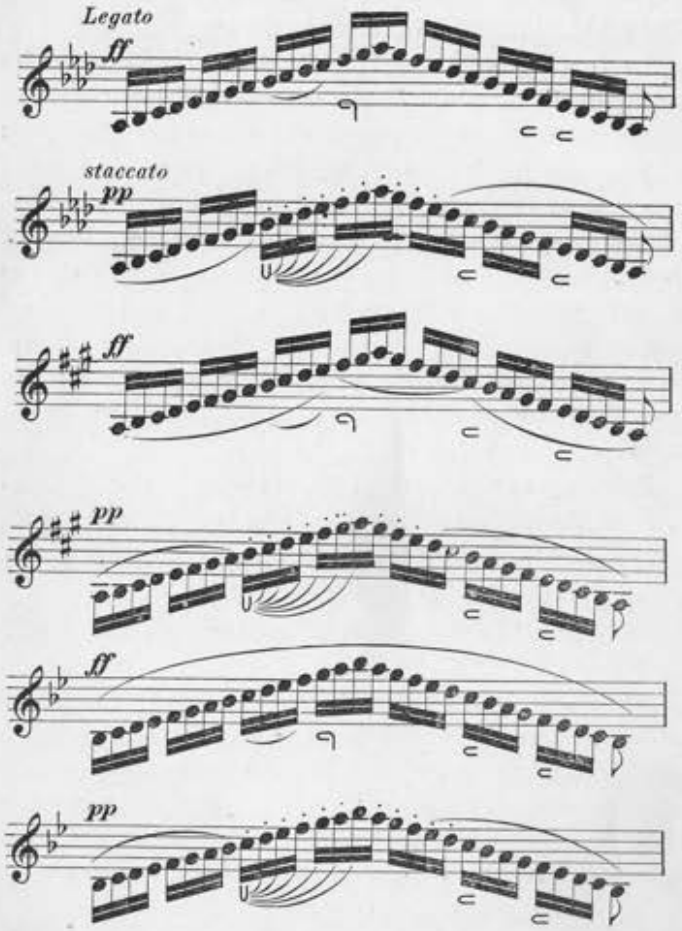
The test in this example is after the first breath. The note is to be taken just where the last was sung, *i. e.*, well down on the breath. This presents the difficulty of taking breath and bringing immediate pressure upon it, preceding the singing of the note. Therefore, the singer is to feel that the note taken after the breath is as well down on the breath as that left; then, taking care to keep the pressure undiminished, move to the next note, *i. e.*, take it without a gap between it and the preceding one, while, with a forward pressure of the upper jaw, as if it were a cap, the tone is covered at the moment the strong diaphragmatic pressure is brought to bear upon it. Being thus held in the vibratory chamber, the breath is economized, and we have a *placed* note, not only down on the breath, but well pointed toward, and capable of vibration in, the front of the mouth behind the upper teeth.

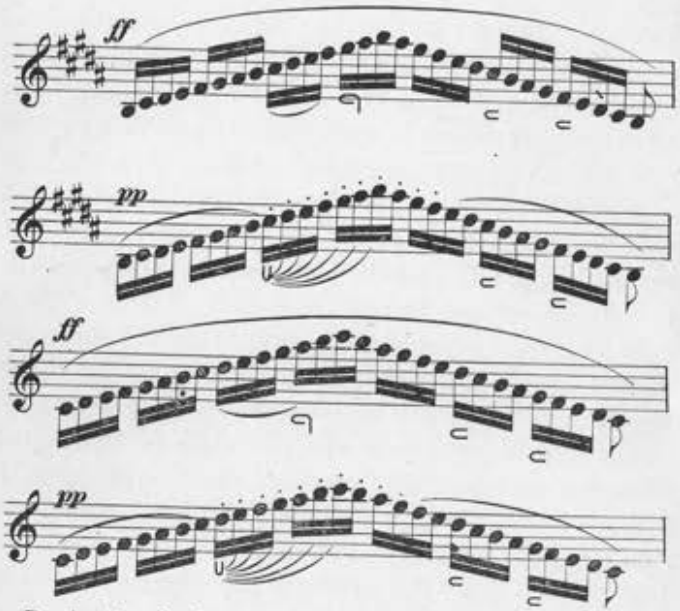
After the highest note is added, take care to sustain breath. Go down with steady movement, having relaxed larynx-pressure, and keeping, as in other exercises, the tones along the roof of mouth, somewhat smilingly, that they may not drop to throat, remembering that ascending or descending a scale one note should be the model of those to follow.

In this manner a perfect legato is obtained. The adjustment of the throat is accomplished without noise, with steadiness, and the notes are placed so closely one to the other there is no break or slurred space between them, wherein is wasted the concentration of breath-forces which brings power. And here let me interpolate that power is not noise. True power is evident in the constraint of force and is thus most effective.

Comprehend that in these severe legato exercises you are teaching the organs of voice that there is not a given spot in the throat for each note. I wish I might do away with the idea, "Go from one note to another." Rather bring one note to that which preceded it, not side by side but one exactly where the other was placed, till the *body* of the voice is equalized, deep, rich, elastic; then the various thinly-shaded tones may be used at will.

Exercise VII.





Begin the double scales smilingly, with scarcely any voice, and crescendo in going up, taking care that the second note, which slips away, is heard, and that all accents are made with a backward impulse. At the second octave in the first scale, which is to be sung *forte*, lower the shoulders well and settle down firmly at the waist, rather leaning on the dorsal (back) muscles. Do not, under any consideration, make an effort to get the high notes by guiding the throat.

The only thought beyond the focussing breath-effort at the waist is to make sure that the lower jaw is held firmly down and back, while, with slightly smiling lips as the higher octave is reached, the upper jaw presses forward. As an example of the effect, liken the tone to a long tube, using a pencil as the tube. Notice that as it moved back at the bottom, the upper point will move forward; but on the high notes, lean against the top of that column, the better to carry it forward, but *only* with the upper jaw, else the throat will make an effort to guide and thus spoil what breath alone must do. When the breath is well down, *i.e.*, under control at the diaphragm, the upper notes will be round and sonorous, and as easily produced as the note a fifth lower. Indeed, there is no change of throat position nor any impulse after the accent of the group in which the highest note lies. So much for the *fortissimo* (loud) legato scale.

Now, repeat the scale softly, singing the first octave legato and the second staccato, remembering to gradually go down on breath, *i. e.*, lower larynx as the waist slowly contracts, and feel, with the palm laid against waist-line, a distinct stroke as the muscles at that point contract, taking care that, while the thought is concentrated at that point (waist), each succeeding note moves farther forward in the mouth and is only

correct when made very softly. If force must be used, it is all wrong; because the throat, not the breath, is the agent used.

There are but two points of concentration in the production of staccato notes, the diaphragm and that sounding-board, the hard-palate. The soft-palate is frequently used, which is an error, for it is raised, thus straining the vocal cords. Unlike the hard-palate, it is capable of neither power nor brilliancy. If the staccato and soft high notes are difficult for a pupil, practice softly with *ah*, merging into *e*, as in *cherry*, bringing the pressure well upon the upper part of each note with the upper jaw as it ascends, as if you were attempting to clasp the tone with the upper teeth like so many fingers.

Again, in doing the staccato scale, feel that the note is a bell in your head, attached to a rope, which strikes at each gentle downward pull, while, at the upper teeth, you are saying *ah* as softly and pointedly, *i. e.*, as narrowly as possible, thus keeping it from becoming too broad.

Examples that appeal to the imagination of one pupil utterly fail with another; but a good teacher never lacks an illustration that will convey the desired idea. When written they must necessarily be general, and are understood only by the initiated. By

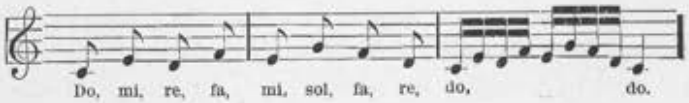
that I mean those who have been fortunate enough to study these truths *viva voce* with a teacher who has developed the ideas.

CHAPTER XVI.

REGARDING EXECUTION, OR FIORITURA.

AS the beginner, in his early attempts to govern the throat and the diaphragm, is apt to hold the muscles rigidly, forgetting to relax in the desire to carry the breath properly, it is well to intersperse with the severer and more serious training in voice-placing, exercises of *agilita*. These give to the singer execution and flexibility of the throat, while resting him from the severer physical exertion of breath-study—for such, indeed, it is. In fact, in olden times singing-schools were termed breathing-schools. At all times in these restful exercises, apply to them the correct attack, though I dislike to call it an attack when our attempt is to begin without an attack and as we speak. Remember, too, to drink the tones, and if effort is required, let the diaphragm supply us with force.

Exercise VIII.



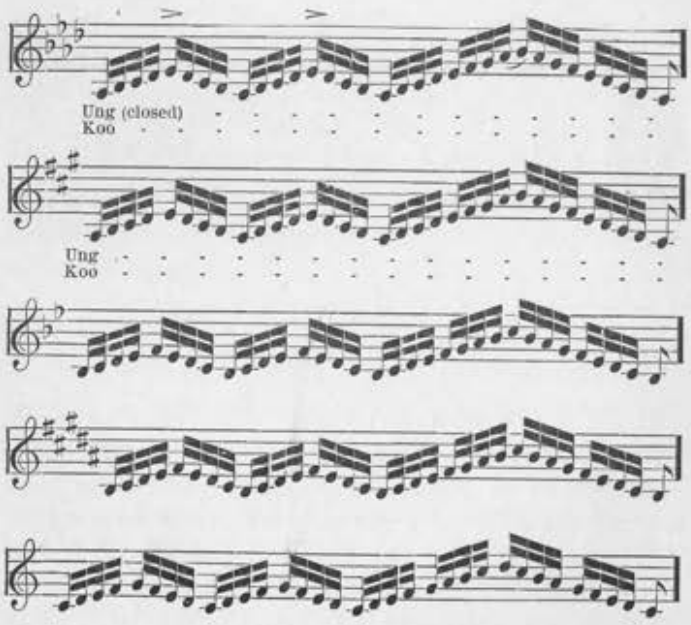
In the above example, concentrate thought upon enunciation, without movement of the lips but with strong tension at the tip of tongue in pronouncing vowels. You will find this the chief secret of enunciatory control. Do not let the throat rise above the level of the speaking-voice as the exercise, transposed by half-tones, becomes higher. Learn it thoroughly in the key given, then carry it through the limits of the voice. *Say* it rather than sing it, as it becomes higher. The pronunciation will carry it into the resonance-chambers of the head with no other effort; and, when done correctly, the singer will be surprised at what a high pitch one can enunciate.

The second measure, sung with *la*, is also sung very softly, accenting well the first note in each group, and coming to the end with a well-placed, deep, sonorous tone on *do*.

Exercise IX.

Sing the above exercise in rapid repetitions, with bell-like distinctness, legato yet martellato (stroke of the hammer of a bell), taking care to cover the octave interval by bringing the notes closely together. To illustrate how little adjustment of the throat is necessary, take *li*, as in *little*, and sing the exercise with that syllable upon each note; also sing it taking care to go down on first note in moving to the second, much as one goes down on a spring-board before leaping into the air.

Exercise X.



Beginning at third group, add the following to the various keys of Ex. X. as an exercise, but softer and less dramatic.

Exercise XI.

Begin softly, with lips closed and tongue resting against the roof of the mouth at base of *narii* (nose-passages), as in pronouncing *ng* in *being*, except that it is not drawn away forcibly, but remains to obstruct the passage in that the tone will pass through the nasal passage. Understand that nasal singing is caused by obstruction of the *narii*, that is, the tone is

unable to pass freely through the nose, and is given the peculiar sound so much disliked.

There is the same backward movement of the throat as in other exercises, and especial pressure against the upper jaw, forming a lever, as one might say, which throws it well into the head. Those who have fixed habits of throat singing need special exercises to coax them away from it; but this in itself will be a great aid if persistently sung softly, as both chest and throat-tones are thus rendered impossible. Indeed, the pupil with stiff throat must be taught that humming correctly leaves the throat perfectly inactive. After practicing this exercise by humming, take the syllables *noo* and *koo*, being careful to give the ninth the same sombre quality, *i. e.*, do not let it change into the thinner timbre of the head as it is inclined to do. To do this the diaphragm must be called into requisition, holding the throat unchanged, the third from the last being a guide for the highest note, while all effort is downward against the waist-contraction. This last manner of doing it brings the same dramatic force used upon the double scale, but it is easier to accomplish; hence it is not an unwise plan to frequently do this exercise first.

For this light practice there are many forms of triplets, fourths and fifths, as well as ascending and de-

scending chromatic scales, which can be improvised; but the best practice and one which, at the same time, calls for quick changes from light to placed or deep tones, not to speak of the development of taste for good music, is to take up the music of the old masters, Rossini, Donizetti, Weber, etc., and do not be persuaded by those who ignorantly affirm that as it is English we wish to sing, this is needless. We can sing the simple music well only when we have subjected the voice to training in music that not only demands of us what we can do, but the utmost that is to be learned. Only the old masters understood the true possibilities of the voice. They present flights of execution (fioritura) which, when understood, is a rest rather than a difficulty. Never offer a soprano music that is written with the *tessitura* of the tenor voice. By *tessitura* I mean the melody strained above the limits which should be sung by a soprano.

CHAPTER XVII.

GENERAL REMARKS.

REMEMBER that the foundation of singing, the soul of song, is the *legato*, and a correct legato can be sung only in the manner described in the exercises given. Feats of agilitá, of fire-works, are vocal embroidery. To obtain the first, is the most difficult and the most necessary; yet vocal education is not complete without the latter, for the flexibility it requires prepares the voice for every shade of color and expression.

To let go or relax is one of the secrets of lightning-like execution. The brain must be educated to precede rapidly the action of the vocal organs; for brain is the motive power or, rather, the engineer at the throttle. Here let me say, no better exercise can be practiced than that of *thinking* the scales; but not enough to tire the throat, which is so sympathetic that people who never *thought* of singing, will go home with aching throats when obliged to listen an entire evening to a person who sings with effort.

Another great assistant to execution is that friendly little accent that, like a trusty and long-used cane, thumps the pavement with a firmness that gives the invalid a new impulse. Very little breath is required; indeed, much depends on accenting and then holding back the breath from the pearls that drop one after another. As an example of accent, strike a tassel, and the one touch will leave it swinging more regularly than if the hand moved it back and forth. Why? Because the hand is more ponderous. This idea of impulse, or accent, is felt in running, and the swiftest runner is, no doubt, the one who can adjust the equipoise of spurts of force in the best manner.

Do not be led into the erroneous idea that by going through the numerous volumes of brilliant exercises provided by teachers whose names have become famous through the number of pupils they have secured rather than by anything they have taught them, you are accomplishing the object desired. I was kept by a teacher incapable of putting his excellent ideas into words, for one school year, daily lessons, upon one exercise! While I would not inflict the same blind ordeal upon one of my own pupils, I have never regretted the discipline and the knowledge that I learned a world of things on that one exercise, and that it is not the many exercises we do, but the principles we apply to the few that lead to results.

These exercises mean voice, and its scientific control. Ever keep in mind that the application of these things to song must be attempted and accomplished. When the drudgery of muscle-drill is well under way, there is yet much to be done in the flowery field of expression, where emotions are to be held with a steady hand, even while they seem to rule; and that while a teacher is absolutely necessary, there is yet a schooling of self to follow, in order to develop one's individuality.

The pupil should understand that learning has its "slough of despond;" that advancement is not made without frequent downfalls. There are sudden halts and seemingly interminable ones; depressions of mind and physical relaxations that effect the voice, when the teacher is called upon to use wise and discreet measures to turn these very relaspes into benefits. For, when the pupil is left to his own resources, and perhaps forced by professional or social obligations to use his voice, he will know how best to save himself and produce the best results, covering by art the defects that physical or mental conditions render apparent. Also, let the pupil be comforted by the knowledge that the voice passes through many phases before reaching perfection, and frequently the backward step is the forerunner to a great stride forward.

Adopt the motto, Perseverance, Concentration and Conscientiousness. When the work is undertaken with the determination to bring it to a successful issue, and with the knowledge that "the fruit soon ripe soon falls"—hence the reward of its work is not to-morrow nor next year, but will surely come and when it comes will stay,—then rest assured that there is pleasure in store for you. Modest, sincere, confident that the right path is being trod, go on; for while giving pleasure to others there will be satisfaction in the knowledge that the possession of the true art of song is one that adds to itself treasures and is a pearl of great price.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANALYSIS OF VOICE-PRODUCTION IN "LAST ROSE OF SUMMER."

THE analysis of this old song is chosen because there are few songs in which the illustrations of *fior di labbra* combined with breath-pressure, in fact, the varied coloring of the voice, can be studied and applied to song as in this. Its exquisite possibilities as a perfect legato makes it a favorite with artists. The first verse is to display no power of voice, even when the student is directed to *go down on breath*.

"1."—*Fior di labbra* at the lips, means to be sung with exquisite delicacy of enunciation, and this cannot be accomplished with great volume of voice. It will be indicated by a line under the words, which will also indicate that they should be enunciated smoothly, to keep a legato like the steady bowing of the violin.

"2."—t/r signifies to place the "r" in "rose" exactly where the "t" in "last" was placed. This will

prevent throat-effort. As the *o* is reached, let it be the opening through which with a suction into the upper jaw or head produces a sweet head-tone, best described by the term "spiritual;" its difference from a dramatic one being that we permit it to vibrate purely in the head, without intensifying by opposition. We draw it up from the diaphragm, instead of coming down to meet it; while our method of enunciating it first deterred us from *reaching* for it, thus closing the throat. Now take the line as a whole, and study a breath secret. If each word sung breaks off the breath, there will be no feeling, no intensity, no coloring. It is like a brook divided into drops, it will sweep nothing before it unless it becomes a united body. Fix this firmly in the mind. The power, the feeling of a song is the effect of breath sustained and carried to a climax, with the words carried upon its bosom like so many ships laden with tidings. Begin softly, smoothly, distinctly, and from the first word *gather* rather than use breath, till at the letter *o* like a white spiral flame it spins an ethereal tone and uses the greater force of breath without other than intensifying tone, and yet reserves enough breath to delicately finish line.

"3."—The line drawn over consonants is to indicate a pressure that will caress them and lend music to the

word. Take care that this is not done by taking the tongue *from* them, but rather by putting it against them and drawing away when the vowel is vocalized. This is so delicate a matter it is difficult to make it clear on paper. Strike an octave on the piano. One person will strike the keys and move away for the second octave naturally. Another will push the keys and lift the hand with the force upward, as if the piano keys burned them. Apply the same to the tongue in pronouncing "the Lord." A novice, if told to make the "l" distinctly, will snap the letter away from the vowel in a manner that makes a staccato of it; or, by attempting to give voice while the "l" closes the mouth, the entire breath explodes upon the "o." Now pronounce it with a firm pressure of tongue against the upper teeth, and taking it gently away sing the "o" (for we cannot sing consonants) without opening the mouth, which would move it too far from its consonants, and to a trained ear make a strung-out, two-syllabled word.

Return to the second line, "Left blooming alone." We find a mark over the first letter, again over the "g" in "blooming." Do not be afraid to stop long enough to let it be heard like a caress, as also the "l" in "alone." It adds the music of speech.

"4."—The sign ⌣ is a modification of going down

on the breath, its effect, while not so dramatic, adding depth and sonorousness without diaphragmatic pressure. That is, deepen it into the lower jaw as if making a double chin, by lowering the tongue at that point and drawing the tone down upon the syllable "bloom" by that means, and end the word by a delicate pronunciation *fior di labbra*, as the lowered muscles relax to place. Now return to the beginning. This is to be learned by syllable, line by line. Attempt nothing further till this much is understood, and remember that in giving it the study of months you are not only learning a song, but an art which applies itself to the school of song.

"5."—Begin the third line as the first was begun, except that the *all* causes a rounder tone further back; but take care to *fior di libɔ̀ra* with the word "lovely," and bring "ly" down to ɤ, thus v/l, keeping the *i* in the syllable "ly" unchanged on the grace note and the note itself. Be careful to deepen *under* any word that sounds shallow or unsatisfactory by well-lowered tongue, and give depth in pronouncing the sonorous vowels "a" and "o."

"6."—In pronouncing the word "are" arises another difficulty, whose nicety can only be hinted at or shown by examples of the right and wrong, as it is a word in which a novice will find it difficult to distinguish a defect. Pronounce the word *there* as follows, "the | yur;" then "are" as *ah-ruh*. This will seem exaggerated, but even educated persons pronounce these words in a modified form of the examples given. As the enemy *r* appears frequently in the remaining lines, it is worth while to study its needs. The defect is caused by the tongue being drawn broadly back and striking the teeth at the sides. Pronounce the word *are* saying *ah*, and, with a dainty, clipping movement, touch the roof of the mouth with the tip of the tongue for the "ɾ"—"are." You will find that the word was shorn of the heavy burr. Try *or;* say, *aw*, keeping the tongue narrowed and quite tense. Now add the *r* as described above. The *r* preceding the vowel is more easily pronounced; but the effort in both cases, when preceding or following *e*, is to *narrow* the vowel, *i. e.*, as I sometimes illustrate to my pupils, make it Gothic. Let *mercy* be *mêrcy;* bring the *r* over the head of *e* to pronounce it as near the *m* as possible. This is to avoid *mur*.

"7."—To return, "are faded and gone." The word "faded" is marked with three *a's* to warn the singer to hold that letter unchanged while singing the three notes, although going down on the breath. Begin it *a*, keep it *a*, then finish the word with a carefully pronounced second syllable. *No* is sounded by the repetition of the sign ⌊∪⌋. See 4.

"8."—"Flower" has the û down on breath with the spiritual tone (see 2), but more diaphragmatic pressure, hence, more dramatic, yet not loud, in this verse.

"9."—Begin the word "rosebud" softly crescendo, and carrying the collected or compressed breath with full force though not loud to "nigh," immediately relax as it diminishes to a tiny tone for the slow and distinct notes of the turn, taking care that it goes into the head without any rigidity of the throat, but in the manner of a humming-tone; also that little breath has been used while suspending it. The final *f* is held or suspended for a well-balanced ⌒. Finally, carry it over the phrase; sing the first words of the next phrase, "to reflect," so well that the breath can be stolen before the *f* is taken, and the singer seem to have sung two phrases with uninterrupted breath. This is a feat that must be done very artistically to be successful, or the failure is a lamentable example of bad phrasing.

"10."—"Or" with a circle around it means to pronounce it sonorously, giving it plenty of room in the mouth by saying *aw* and narrowing the *r* to it with the tip of tongue, without changing the mouth.

"11."—The "i" in "give" is to be held distinctly while lowering the jaw to round the tone.

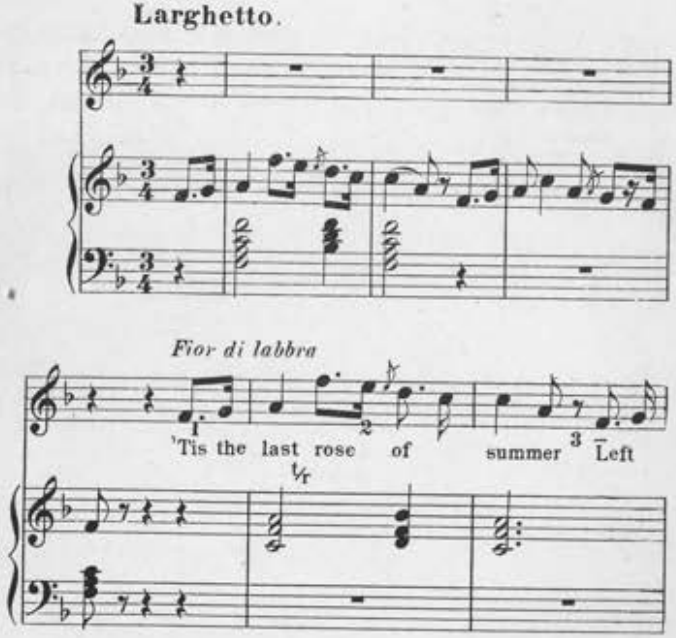
"12."—Having collected breath through the line, let it be used on "sigh," holding the note till that is effected; then lingeringly, yet breathlessly, sigh the words "for sigh."

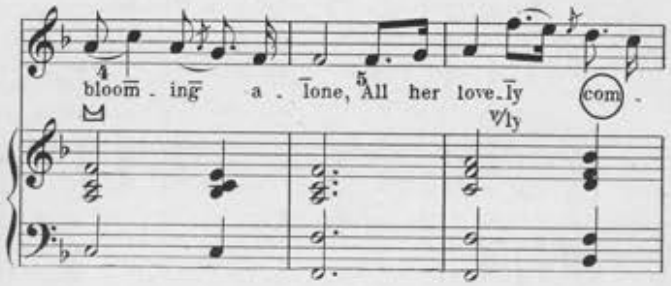
The second verse will be understood by its signs, if this verse has been studied intelligently.

"13."—If the singer is advanced enough to manage dramatic diaphragmatic control, let the line "Thus kindly," etc., be made down on the breath and *fortissimo*, diminishing on the "d" in "bed," and letting the voice come forward (*fior di labbra*), take the F with a thread of voice, then with a sweep of breath down again on "where" and crescendo again with impassioned feeling, till the words "lie scentless," with their sharp, delicately-pointed vowels "i" ("lie"), "e" ("scent"), "e" ("less"), make an etching of words, while beneath them sobs an unhappy soul. The next line is sung a little softer.

"14."—"Mates" has the sustained breath, but collects greater force by going down on the breath. It remains to let it spin through the "a" and brings down the word "of" to the level of "mates;" and, like a bird's sweet note, tiny but pure, the voice moves from the high note to the one before, and, if the singer is daring, comes down the phrase "the garden" with a crescendo, making it dramatic, and necessitat-

ing a careful opening of throat and going down on breath. The last line also requires marvelous control to return with art to the *fior di labbra*, with tears behind and below it, but which must not blur the picture. The whole story is told in the words "Lie scentless." Use the breath on the accented syllable "scent," yet linger on the final syllable by a shadow of breath. Stop—a sigh—"and dead!" Sadly, reverently, gently. Was anything more beautiful ever written?

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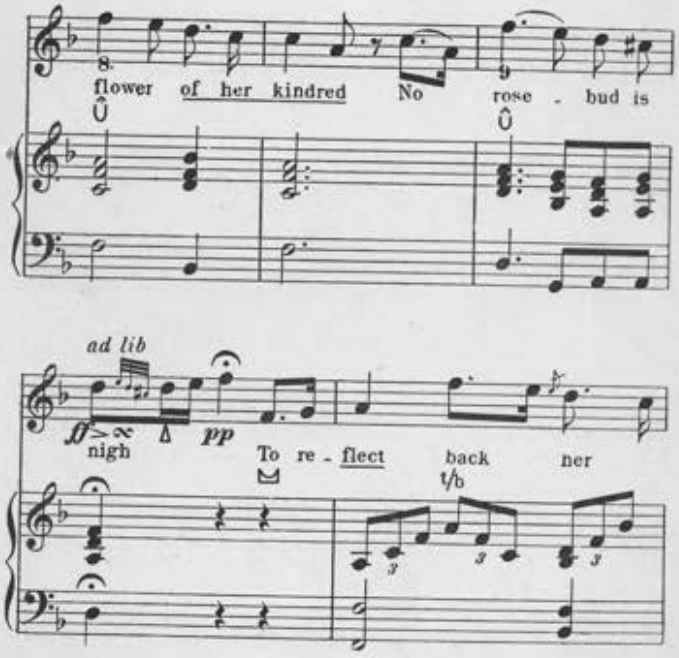
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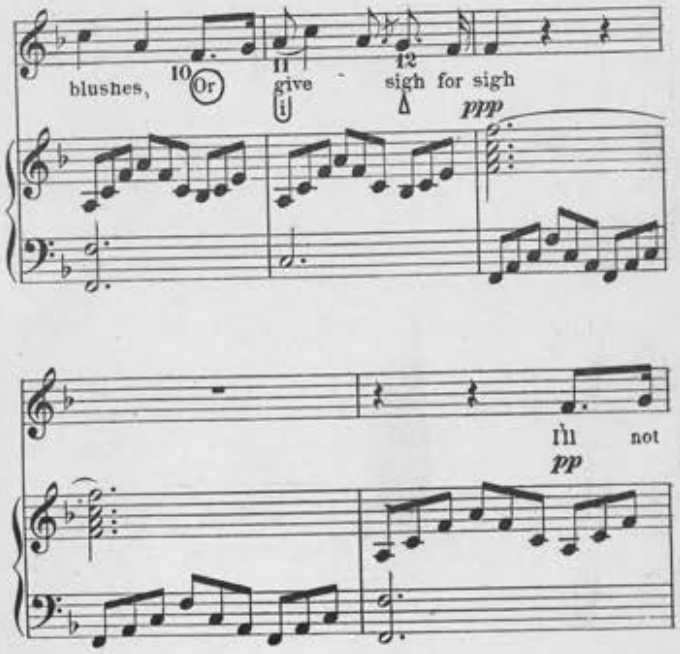
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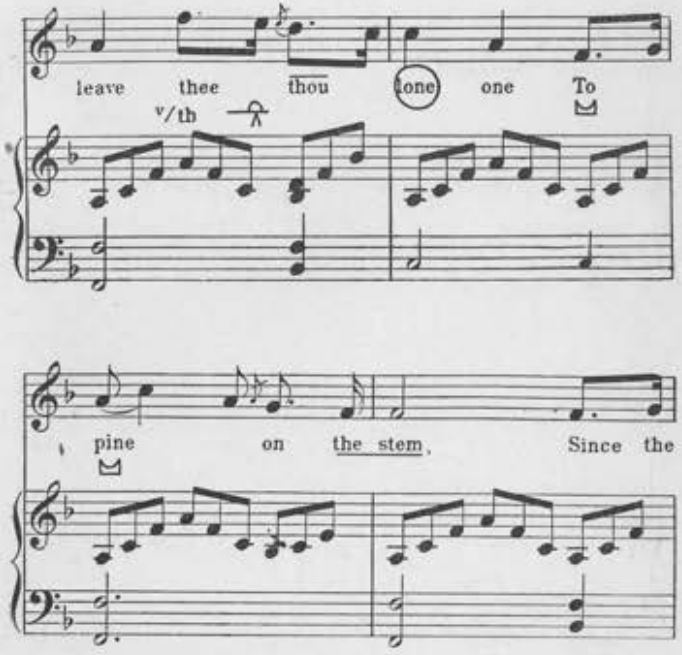
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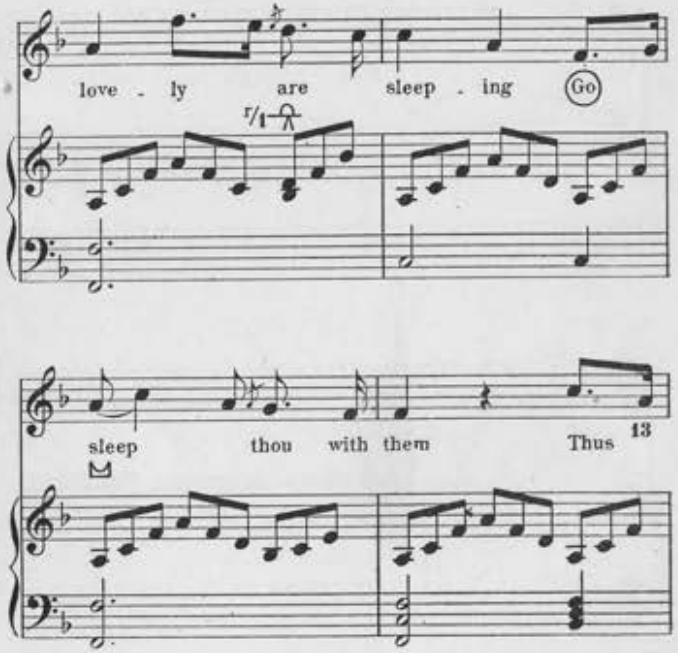
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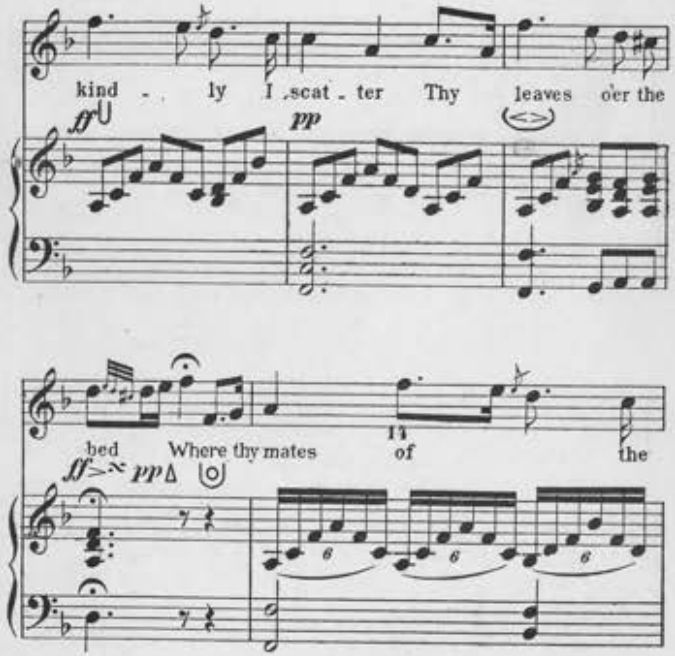
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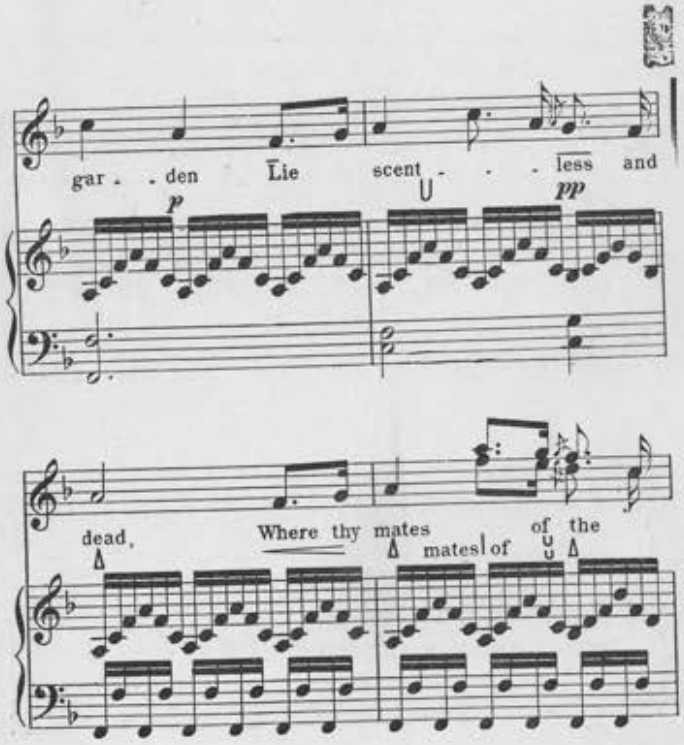
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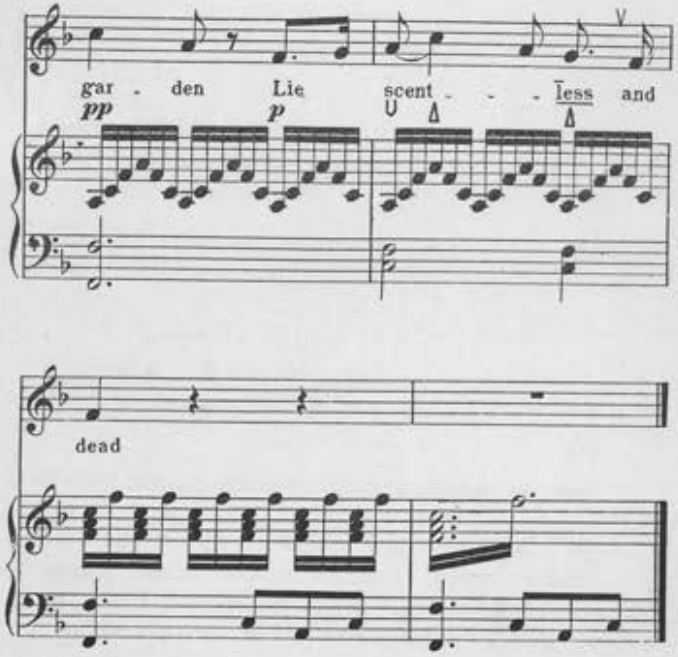
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