THE SINGER'S CATECHISM & CREED

by

BLANCHE MARCHESI

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND DIAGRAMS

Here I lay down the truth
about two hundred and twenty years of teaching
by one method

Garcia 75
Mathilde M 65
Salvatore 35
Blanche 38
213!

LONDON
J. M. DENT & SONS LIMITED

Printed in Great Britain
for
J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.
Aldine House Bedford St. London
Toronto . Vancouver
Melbourne . Auckland
by The Temple Press Letchworth
First Published 1932

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY BELOVED PARENTS

SALVATORE AND MATILDE MARCHESI

PREFACE

THOSE who seriously wish to learn the truth about the voice and its production may find it here.

Anatomy will only be mentioned so as to make facts clear, pathology only so far as to enlighten singers and teachers on what should be avoided as dangerous for the voice and on what may usefully be practised. Simplicity is my aim. I do not wish to dazzle, but to be understood.

The voice of the human being, how to beautify and strengthen it, how to make it last as long as the body is in perfect condition—that is my subject. Thought and truth only are my aim, and the destruction of the false messages that are spread all over the world.

When I am gone, I shall leave, beside the few instructors I educated to continue teaching my method, this, my book, to be a guide for every one who is interested in singing.

Although it is preferable to have drunk at the well of truth, guided by knowledge and experience, this book may yet become a valuable source of information for those who never had the chance of personal tuition and who honestly seek to know and teach the truth.

I shall have to do what I always avoid in ordinary life —to speak about myself. But this cannot be helped, for it is my lifelong experience and conviction that has to be laid down in these pages.

There is no time for trifling considerations. We knock at

the door of eternity sooner than we conceive. It is urgent that I should speak now. And what I would say cannot remain untold. Even should life continue beyond expectation, my faculties may not stay with me as long as my breath, and before the torch of my knowledge is extinct, I must let it burn to enlighten the path of others.

This is my Spiritual Testament.

Looking back upon my past life with its constant and endless sufferings, as a human being and as an artist, I have learned to understand that our real aim, if we have any task of importance to fulfil, is to be useful. When young and full of hopes, we all endeavour to shape our own destiny; only later in life do we learn that it is less important to reach the goal we have set ourselves, than to help others on their journey.

A life of arduous labour again and again hindered me in my determination to write down my creed. Had I not been urged by that strong invisible hand which in important moments of my life has always shown me the way, this book would have remained unwritten.

It was the knowledge gained from predecessors that made me what I am. To them, too, I owe the facts which showed me the unshakable truth of this unique singing method, a method practised uninterruptedly for two hundred and twenty years, crowned by never-failing success, both in the training of new students and in saving voices ruined by wrong methods. Garcia taught it for seventy-five years, my mother, Matilde Marchesi, for sixty-five, my father, Salvator Marchesi, for thirty-five, and myself for thirty-eight. These two hundred and twenty years of continuous teaching and devotion to the training of students in the

same method have proved the value of the discovery of Manuel Garcia, the second of that great name.

Why this method has not been adopted by the whole singing and teaching world remains a mystery to me. Since a multitude of stars was produced by the Garcia and Marchesi schools, the world might surely have guessed that this regular output of great and small artists was due to some infallible underlying principle.

I have seen, and still see, flocks of singing birds swarming in every country in search of the perfect teacher. Comparatively few reach the goal; others disappear by the thousand every year, never to be heard of. The few who came to us in a not utterly hopeless condition were as a rule pupils of the old master Garcia II or of one of his disciples.

A curious case worth mentioning is that of three Australians introduced to me in London, who showed signs of having been trained in our method. In answer to my question, they all said that they had been with a Garcia pupil, Mrs. Christian, once a singer of repute, who, whilst touring with Charles Santley, became his great friend. The bond of friendship was based on their art and also on their Catholic faith, which was, with both, profound and sincere.

Having known much grief, Mrs. Christian retired from a public career and, fortified by the advice of Santley, followed her innermost desire by entering a convent in Australia. In possession of a valuable method, which she knew to be a secret worth imparting to others, she felt it her duty to enter the convent only with a special permission to teach singing. I say honestly that these three Australian voices, which were not those of professionals, are the only ones in which I found little to correct and to put in order.

After I read Melba's memoirs, I found that she too was a pupil of Mrs. Christian in Australia, and I feel that this fact should be known, as it substantiates the claims I advance. I do not know if this nun is still alive, but I gladly record my joy in her work, which proved once again the wisdom of Garcia II.

In large, simple outlines, mentioning only a few principal parts of the body involved in the production of sound, I will lay down here everything a person wishing to sing should know. Medical books may teach to the minutest details the constitution and the ordinary functions of the vocal instrument; but when it comes to singing, they reveal only part of the facts and ignore others. The laryngoscope cannot teach singing.

As long as an artificial larynx has not been invented to show all its details and function to perfection, like a watch that may be seen working in a glass case lit up by electricity, it will remain almost impossible to explain to the average student and to other people interested in the workings of the voice what this minute and marvellous machinery produced by nature really does when we speak or sing. The fact is that every human being can speak without ever thinking about the process of speech, because it is a natural function, like any other, man remains ignorant of the secret that makes all such functions possible.

It is only when one tries to sing that one realizes that there are different ways of doing so—right and wrong ways, painful and painless ways, attended by pleasant and unpleasant results and too often by disastrous consequences. Then one begins to investigate.

There is no doubt about it, the singer must know and

study his vocal equipment. No musician is ever found playing an instrument without being familiar with it, but singers as a rule seem neither concerned nor curious about the way to treat their instrument. It is incredible, but none the less true that the majority of singing students who consult a teacher are unaware of the existence of the larynx and, when asked to locate it, unable to do so. By this time, it is true, some interest in the voice and a little knowledge of its functions has penetrated into the world, thanks to the teaching of my predecessors. When I was a child, I well remember that such terms as vocal cords, larynx, etc. were completely unknown. I admit that to-day the general public's curiosity about the voice is increasing. Pamphlets, books, and articles are constantly brought out, and an endeavour to penetrate the mysteries of voice-training has produced a special literature. The musical papers are filled with the discussions of singing teachers who, every one of them anxious to appear particularly interesting and convincing, try to find a special method and thus advance the most incredible and preposterous discoveries. Ignorance, conceit, and humbug are only too often met with in their profession. To pick up a handful of books and articles preaching some new vocal gospel is to be appalled at the utter nonsense they contain, which would be comic if it were not so tragic in its consequences. Nothing is too stupid, too incredible or too impossible to be proclaimed as vocal science. All sorts of methods, from whispering to shouting, are advocated. Some teachers claim that the voice must be used and practised only mentally. Have you ever heard of mental digestion? Others hold that there is no method at all, that will-power alone is wanted. "Why

make a difference between speaking and singing?" some will say. But the craziest of all are those who ascertain that one may sing without a larynx and that vocal cords are of no use whatever.

In no other profession do we find the same insolent disdain of logic, the same outrageous misuse of public faith. Have you ever read of dancing masters binding the legs of their pupils with straps whilst teaching them their use? Do you find any who advise cutting off the legs before dancing, or who advise their pupils not to use their limbs at all, to try no exercises whatever, but to start straight away with the most difficult pirouettes or tip-toe dancing?

The answer would be a hearty laugh.

But in this tragic profession of mine nobody laughs, except the teacher with a fat income or a few initiated, intelligent people who see through all this bluff and advertisement.

Every day you may read in the papers about murders that have been committed and see the names of the murderers exposed. You will never find anywhere an article, pamphlet, or book concerning the murder of thousands of beautiful voices and containing a public denunciation of the culprits. All that happens is that the injured singers withdraw, bury their grief, and never come forward to express the names of those who destroyed all their hopes of a career.

In writing this I exonerate all those who have honestly striven to do good work. If they had their convictions, they cannot be condemned, even if they failed to succeed. But they will have to admit to themselves that every word I say is true. Those who have gone on every day of their

lives selling their ignorance to the confident student will probably be up in arms against this book. Some others will try to learn and understand, while others again will endeavour to follow my principles closely, avoiding carefully to mention the source from which they drew their wisdom, and if they are clever, they will show results and take the credit to themselves. I shall not complain, so long as the student is saved.

Would that schools of music in all quarters of the globe sent me those who are endowed with all the gifts and instincts of singing and teaching. Several years' serious study in voice training, voice healing, and the traditional rules of style on their part would cleanse the world of false prophets and introduce the only valid method in every public institution. If I were to see this coming to pass, I would gladly know my place occupied by my successors. I rarely have the opportunity to undertake the complete education of teachers, but a few have given me the joy of learning my method thoroughly and of imparting it well. That there should be no mistake, either during my lifetime or after, and that the world should recognize the disciples who studied our method to my complete satisfaction, I shall issue a diploma that shall bear witness to their being the true apostles of my creed.

PARIS, 1932.

B. M.

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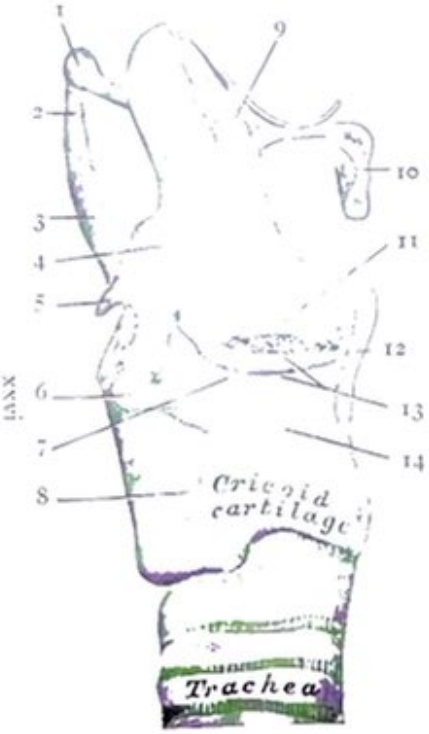
LARYNX SEEN SIDEWAYS



A Dissection to show the Right Half of the Conus Elasticus.

The right lamina of the thyroid cartilage and the subjacent muscles have been removed.

1. Greater cornu of hyoid bone.
2. Lateral hyothyroid ligament.
3. Superior cornu of thyroid cartilage.
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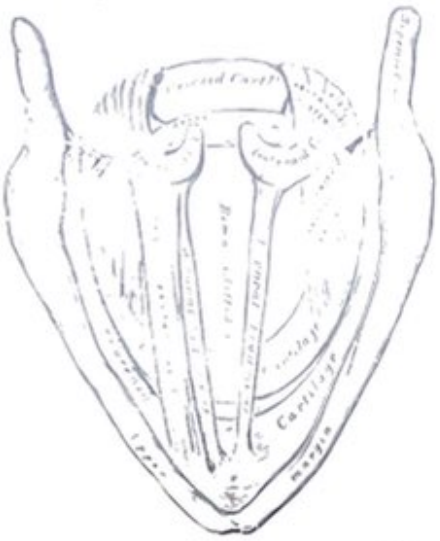
THE MUSCLES OF THE LARYNX
Superior aspect (Enlarged)



(From Gray's *Anatomy*, by courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.)

CHAPTER I

THE VOICE

I. BREATH

How should a singer breathe?

With open mouth, deeply and noiselessly.

How deeply?

The lungs must be filled completely to the point where their capacity comes upon the supporting diaphragm.

If the diaphragm is weak, the capacity will be small, whereas a strong diaphragm will give powerful support to the breath.

Does breathing mean only the inhaling of air?

No, it also means exhaling.

Singing is but a constant coming and going of breath, an alternate filling and emptying of the lungs.

May we breathe through the nose?

We can draw air through the nose, but we cannot thus fill the lungs to the full capacity needed for singing, the breathing-time which song allows us being too short. Breathing deeply through the nose is too slow a process for singing.

The nose was created by a wise Providence as a preventive against quick and deep breathing. Extreme cold or heat, dust, and insects are kept away from direct contact with throat and lungs by the inner structure of the nose. But in singing nothing may be allowed to prevent the ready access of a full stream of air to the lungs.

Normal man sleeps with closed mouth, breathing through his nose. In his sleep, throat and lungs are protected by

the air passing through the nose. Breathing slowly and deeply while he sleeps, his lungs are filled regularly with the required quantity of air, the body being in a state of complete immobility. When awake, man uses much more breath, taking it in now through the nose, now through the mouth, as circumstances require. In speaking, he breathes through the mouth, and when exerting himself in any way, he finds breathing through the nose impossible. The same happens in singing, and to a much greater extent. There the lungs must be filled to their utmost capacity, quickly and noiselessly, and never could a deep, quick, and noiseless breath be taken through the nose, for the velocity of breathing in song is too great.

Are there different ways of breathing for the singer?

Yes, there are three. The shortest breath, generally used for speaking, reaches but superficially to the upper part of the lungs near the collar-bone. This is called clavicular breathing.

The second is called lateral breathing. Here we dive considerably deeper, reaching the parts of the lungs which lie between the armpits and the waist. Though a good deal deeper, this is still not sufficiently deep for singing.

The true singer's breath is called diaphragmatic breathing. Here the lowest extremity of the lungs is reached, this kind of breath being the only one to fill the lungs completely.

How are we to know that our breath is deep enough to fill the lungs?

By comparing it to a yawn. The singer's breath must be as deep as the breath we take in yawning.

What produces noisy breathing?

Anything that changes the shape of the windpipe, and anything that obstructs it and tries to find a way out. In extreme cases this would amount to contraction of the windpipe caused by suffocation or by some violent emotion. Any such obstruction of the windpipe and modification of

its shape forces the air to escape through an imperfectly opened tube and thus produces noise.

The bronchial tubes, when filled with mucus or other matter, constantly attempt to free themselves of their contents. This amounts to coughing. The air passages cannot endure the presence of anything but air and contract violently to rid themselves of the disturbing presence of a strange substance that cannot remain in them without creating trouble.

The most painful and audible form of wheezing is produced by bronchitis, asthma, oppression accompanying heart failure, or nervous contractions of the windpipe.

Referring to abnormal contractions of the windpipe, I remember two interesting cases which came to my notice in my first youth, when I attended my mother's class as a listener. Both cases were submitted to her by doctors, who hoped that proper breathing and singing would help to counteract the painful and noisy closing of the windpipe. My mother used every means possible to produce relaxation and complete opening of the windpipe, in order that deep breathing should let the air pass noiselessly. But although in both cases there was a remarkable improvement, a wheezing sound in filling the lungs remained always noticeable. One of the two ladies had been treated by the doctor with an instrument thrust down the windpipe to widen the passage, but it had no effect.

Such cases never came my way, but forms of difficult breathing and lack of capacity to retain breath I met with several times. These cases were the result of nervous affections and also of a lack of support from the diaphragm, which through great weakness caused difficulty in breathing.

Both these cases were of English singers who occupied prominent positions, but although everything was tried to cure their nervous system and straighten the diaphragm, their sustaining power never became normal. According

to my own theory, the diaphragm remained weak through the reflex influence of disturbances in the brain. Nevertheless, in both cases I obtained very good results, improving the condition especially by treatment with Swedish massage.

Can bad breathing produce tremolo?

Yes. If the working vocal organ is not sufficiently supported by a deep diaphragmatic breath, the column of air, rising sparingly and unequally to the vocal cords, will not be sufficiently strong to produce a firm sound.

The vocal cords having to vibrate to an insufficient quantity of air, they will, to begin with, never develop full strength. The efforts made in singing by all the muscles of the larynx without the sustaining power of the air which relieves those muscles from such efforts will soon cause their weakness, and unreliability and unsteadiness of tone will be the result. If this fault is not corrected at the beginning by full diaphragmatic breathing, it will, in some cases, produce quivering sounds resembling the tremolo. (These may derive from other causes also. See the section on Tremolo.)

Tremulous speech comes from the same source. You cannot speak without taking adequate breath. Observing people, one meets some who through nervousness or ignorance try to speak whole endless sentences without pumping air into their lungs. They do not seem to realize this bad habit at all and go on cultivating it until they make the hearer himself breathless as their speech proceeds. Such people should learn to read aloud and mark their breath-pauses just as you mark them for singing, breathing deeply and punctuating their sentences, never trying to speak with not a particle of air in their lungs.

How should one take breath when singing?

The singer must stand erect, perfectly quiet, drop the jaw first, open the mouth wide enough to let two fingers through, take a deep diaphragmatic breath, and only when

She does not clarify if this should be done vertically or horizontally. Garcia advised the natural, free fall of the jaw.

the lungs are filled attack a note, hold it with even strength without increasing or diminishing, not until the breath is giving way, but stopping the sound when it is still in full strength.

The mouth may only be shut again when the necessity of swallowing becomes imperative. As the flautist holds his instrument always ready between the phrases, so the singer must always be prepared with breath and mouth for the coming notes.

When the sound is finished, the last remainder of breath left in the lung must be expelled and a deep fresh diaphragmatic breath taken. At the student's first lessons this must be practised slowly and patiently. In a short time, deep noiseless breathing will have been acquired.

Does the exercise of swelling the sound from *piano* to *forte* improve breathing and lung-power?

No, the swelling of sound is pernicious, especially for beginners. It does not improve breathing, and is positively dangerous for the vocal cords.

Generally, when singers begin to learn, they have not the required power nor the facility to manage sound at all. The first endeavour must be to improve the voice. The swelling of tone is most tiring and in consequence diminishes the capacity of the voice for increasing its power. Besides, as we may often hear in performances on stage and platform, singers who have contracted the habit of practising ill-timed crescendos and diminuendos, misadapt it to their song, and so cultivate one of the most detestable faults in singing, the senseless and ugly swelling and decreasing of sound anywhere and at any time, which ruins the flow and sense of a composition.

This I declare: If the singer suffers from no disease, breathing, made subservient to song, becomes second nature and need not be preached by a special gospel.

It is generally the teacher who does not know anything

about the voice and its work who loses precious time in explaining breath to his pupils with the most exaggerated earnestness. Unhealthy lungs cannot be fundamentally healed by breathing exercises. In the case of illness, local or general, breathing capacities are diminished, and the training of the voice is hampered.

Nodules, inflammation, paralysis, etc., may go so far as to force the singer to inhale constantly, and thus to disturb the performance of the music presented.

It is not exclusively the breathing that develops the voice—that is done by method; but it may be said that the perfect working of the vocal cords improves the breathing, because the more the vocal cords are trained in the right way, the less air they will require to vibrate.

When at last the vocal cords and the whole vocal organ have been fully trained, the breath required to sustain the voice will appear to have been bettered; but it is in reality the refined and perfected work of the instrument that will by and by need less breath to put it into action.

I must insist on repeating that illness will always influence breathing, however good the method may be. Teachers who call themselves specialists in breathing make their pupils go through innumerable and eccentric exercises, and find in this way a very easy and remunerative living.

What about the method that tells you to sing without taking breath?

It is so ridiculous as to require no answer. This so-called method belongs to the same category as all the others that lack every foundation of knowledge, especially that which pretends that one can teach a completely diseased larynx to produce perfect sounds, and that even persons possessing no larynx at all might be taught to sing an operatic air.

I always feel inclined to write to the persons concerned, after a perusal of their advertisements, that they really should confront us with so unusual a performance. Let

them practise what they preach: have their larynx removed, and sing us the air of Fidelio or the call of the Valkyries. We shall then endorse their claims.

2. THE VOICE

What is the singer's instrument?

The larynx.

Where is the larynx?

In the frontal centre of the neck.

Can it be seen?

It is more or less prominent, and in some persons it may be seen rising and falling when in action. With others it is quite invisible, but with the aid of the laryngoscope it is easily observed internally.

Does it act alone?

No, the voice works like an organ, using three distinct parts, which collaborate in producing tone. The organ consists of the bellows that send up the air to the sound-producing pipes. Between the bellows and the pipes lies the keyboard that touches the notes required. The bellows, keyboard, and pipes make the organ sound.

In man the bellows are represented by the lungs, which send up the air to the vocal cords, and put them into vibration, thus producing sound. The bones of the mouth, face, head, and chest form the resonant sounding-boards representing the organ's keyboard.

Thus the human instrument, like the organ, consists of three distinct parts working together simultaneously and creating sound. Singing therefore begins by the filling of the lungs, the use of the vocal cords, and vibration of the tones hitting different sounding-boards. The diaphragm is the solid basis of this function of breathing and holding the breath in control.

Take your larynx away and you cannot produce sound. Take breath away and the consequence will be the same. Take away the diaphragm and breath cannot be held.

Where are the lungs?

Inside the ribs. They inhale and exhale air, which is drawn in and expelled through the mouth.

Is sound produced by the larynx or windpipe?

The windpipe and the larynx are only shells and cannot alone take vocal action.

What is the sound-producing element?

The vocal cords.

Do they act alone?

No, they act aided by muscles and nerves. But none of these can produce any audible result without breath.

What are the vocal cords?

They are fibrous ligaments covered by thin mucous membrane, stretched across the middle of the larynx, meeting closely at the interior of the Adam's apple. The muscles of the larynx enclose these ligaments.

The ligaments called vocal cords rest on the last ring of the windpipe, where they are worked by the arytenoid muscles which direct their movements. The windpipe is formed by cartilage rings, and the larynx can execute an upward or downward motion owing to several of these rings being split in half, which permits the execution of an accordion-like movement, with the difference that it acts in a vertical instead of a horizontal position.

This last ring of the windpipe, supporting the ends of the vocal cords, can move backwards and forwards and consequently stretch or relax the vocal cords—that is, lengthen or shorten them.

Where are the sounding-boards to be found?

The sternum is one. It is a large bone lying over the windpipe and united to the clavicular bones, required for the resonance of the chest register.

The second is the hard palate, necessary for the female middle register.

The third is the vault of the pharynx. The frontal bone and whole skull are made to vibrate when the vault of the pharynx is hit by the sound.

For man, who sings with the low register (chest) through the whole of his range, using a special change only at a certain point where he is obliged to cover, the chest bones produce resonance all through the voice. In covering, the first and third sounding-boards are used simultaneously.

When men sing falsetto they, like women, use head voice—in other words, the third position and third sounding-board. To some men this is very easy; they can imitate the voices of women, as is sometimes heard in music halls, but it always causes hilarity and is as a rule used for comic effects only.

What unites the larynx to the lungs?

The windpipe.

What is the windpipe?

A tube formed of cartilage.

What actually happens in singing when sound is produced?

After taking in breath, filling the lungs to the extreme part resting on the diaphragm, the singer mentally pitches the sound he wants to take and closes the vocal cords. The breath, rushing upwards in a strong concentrated column and not finding the air passage open, hits against the closed vocal cords, and puts them into vibration, ejecting the air slowly through them. They are more or less tightly closed, according to the position of the larynx.

The moment a fresh breath is being taken in, the sound stops. The glottis (as the space between the vocal cords is called) opens, and only closes again after the refilling of the lungs and upon the emission of another sound.

Has the glottis any function?

The glottis, we might say, is our door to life and death.

Through it we breathe and thus continue life. Through the glottis passes our first and our last sigh. It is not only the place where sound is formed or silenced, but our very existence depends on its action and freedom from obstruction. Nothing but air may enter our respiratory organs through the glottis. Any matter formed by illness or any object passing through accidentally has to be ejected immediately or removed by operation, lest death by suffocation should follow.

In cases where the glottis no longer offers a free passage, the human being can be saved only by an operation called tracheotomy, which opens a way for the air to enter and to leave the lungs by cutting a hole through the windpipe in front of the throat and inserting a tube that is kept there until the normal aperture of the larynx has been cleared.

Can the vocal cords be seen?

Yes, with the aid of the laryngoscope.

What is the laryngoscope?

A small mirror attached to the end of a stem, enabling a doctor to see the vocal cords and adjacent parts.

Who invented this?

Manuel Garcia II.

How could throats be cured or operated on before this invention?

They could not. The larynx, before Garcia's invention, could only be studied on a corpse.

Laryngology therefore started with Garcia's invention, and the medical world owes him a debt as great as singers owe him for his discovery of the working of the human voice and its registers.

What colour are the vocal cords?

When healthy a pale yellow, but they appear white because surrounded by red. They can take a greyish-pink or red tint, according to the condition in which illness or faulty voice-production may have left them.

What makes the vocal cords close or open, shorten, relax, or lengthen?

These two different movements are the outcome of the action of two most important muscles called the arytenoid. They set in motion the cartilages of Santorini, which look like two little birds and rest on the last large ring of the windpipe.

What is it that enables the vocal cords to pitch the sounds higher or lower?

Just that very lengthening and shortening of the vocal cords. It is the degree of tension that decides the pitch of the note taken, just as in the case of a violinist, whose fingers, placed on the strings of his violin, shorten them, and make you hear higher or lower notes.

When one considers that a woman's voice can have a range of four octaves, one stands amazed at the wonderfully minute mechanism of these two vocal cords and at the control that must be exercised in order that every whole tone and semitone be properly articulated throughout this wide range, when the length of vocal cords, which naturally varies in different individuals and types of voice, never exceeds half an inch. It will be obvious from this fact that, to obtain a clear transition from one note to the other, slow practice for a considerable time is necessary. Quick exercises can only result in blurring, not in settling, the pure intonation of semitones. To convince oneself that it is the stretching of the vocal cords which regulates the vocal pitch, one need only take a ribbon, cord, or elastic string, and try to pull it more or less tightly. The result will be obvious.

Can the vocal cords be opened and closed without sound?

Yes, you can think a note at will, pitch it, in your mind, place the note in tightening the cords, and by keeping the larynx immobile without making the necessary movement to rush the air column against the vocal cords, you have placed your note without making a sound.

The moment your will demands an air column and, with the help of the diaphragm, throws it against the closed vocal cords which have been mentally pitched, the sound will be heard.

Never tumble into your singing. Always prepare your notes, aiming mentally and physically before actually striking. Hitting will thus be avoided, and also the risk of a weak breathy attack averted. Starting with precision and continuing to work straight from one note to the other will prevent slurring or scooping. Both are abominations due to bad training.

Can sound be stopped at will?

Yes; wish to stop, hold back the breath, release the tension of the vocal cords, and sound will be instantly cut off.

Can vocal cords tear?

One can pinch, burn, pull, or cut them, but they have never been known to tear.

Formidable efforts, however, may cause the most serious injury to the vocal cords, but only in a few cases has one heard of the tearing of the so-called false vocal cords, which surround the real ones, seemingly for protection, but which are only a tissue covered with mucous membrane.

I remember such a case occurring during my early childhood and being discussed in my presence. Frau Dillner, dramatic soprano at the Vienna Opera, was singing the part of Venus in *Tannhäuser*, when, trying to take the top C in the second (medium) register, she remained, after this terrific effort, with her mouth wide open and unable to utter another sound, whereupon the curtain had to be dropped. She seems to have torn a false vocal cord. She never sang again.

If women singers only knew the dangers they ask for every time they scream their top notes, they would never do it. But that can only be laid at the door of their instructors and of some directors who, especially in Germany, induce singers to scream. This has been experienced and related to me by several pupils of mine and of my mother, who were simply persecuted because they refused to shout.

When I made my début in Prague as Brünnhilde in *The Valkyrie*, I received a visit from the director's wife before I went on the stage. Kissing me, she said: "And now, my dear, shout for all you are worth; bring the house down." To which I smilingly replied: "Do not expect me to change my ways and to leave my voice in Prague."

3. THE REGISTERS

What are registers?

They are the positions the larynx can take at will. The larynx can rise and fall, and must in fact do so in singing.

Garcia explains a register as "a series of homogeneous sounds produced by one mechanism, differing essentially from sounds produced by another mechanism (change of position), which equally produces a series of homogeneous sounds." Strength and colour of tone in the different registers are not always perfectly equalized, and one of the singer's endeavours must be to keep strictly to the change of registers in the appropriate places, trying at the same time to blend the passages, to fortify the weak-sounding parts and to beautify the notes showing a lack of sympathetic sonority.

How many changes of the larynx are possible?

Men as well as women are capable of three changes.

What happens in changing position?

The larynx standing on the top of the windpipe, the cut rings of which permit a descending and ascending movement, changes position by rising or falling, bending slightly backward when rising.

The lowest first position in men and women is called the chest voice.

Why is the first register called chest register?

The word chest does not mean that one sings in or with the chest; it merely refers to the resonance of sound in the chest-bones, which form the sounding-board for this, the lowest position.

On which note do women change from the first to the second position?

Women stop taking chest notes when they reach E, and let their larynx rise into the second position, called medium.

Why is the second position called medium?

The larynx stands about half-way up the throat, and the second register, being between two other registers, seems to stand in the middle of the two extremes.

As low notes are called chest notes, after the sounding-board used for their resonance, the notes of the second position should be called hard-palate notes, the sounding-board used for this second register being the hard palate. This term should be in general use, but the word medium having become current, I shall not insist.

Do men change from the first to the second register in the same place as women?

No, men change into the second register only after having sung through almost the whole range of the voice in the chest register. It is only above man's top E♭ that the first change takes place. The notes following the change are called covered tones, and the place where it is effected differs according to the quality of the voice.

A bass covers his E♭, in his younger years even his D. A baritone covers E♮ and in youth his E♭. A tenor starts covering on F and does not cover his E except in certain passages or for some special expression. If E♮ is found difficult on *ah*, it had better be left alone for a time, lest the covering of it should become a habit. This part of men's

voices might be compared in a way, but in one way only, with women's medium voices. It does not find its resonance on the hard palate alone, but by a contraction of the pharynx, a slight bending backward of the larynx, and in a beginner using a closed vowel like *o*, *u*, or *e* (Italian *i*), it finds a sounding-board also in the bone lying opposite the back nostrils, connected with the frontal and head bones and called the vault of the pharynx.

Women's third register starts invariably on top F♯. In the earliest of Garcia's books as well as in some books by his disciples one may read that the woman's head voice begins on the middle C, an idea that must be explained and corrected. Garcia probably meant that from the middle C upwards women can use the third sounding-board, belonging to the head voice, by throwing sounds right back on an open *ah*. But this must be avoided, as it produces the pale, hollow sound unfortunately taught in Milan nowadays, a method calculated to make the voice sound weak and empty, sometimes even shrill.

It is unquestionably possible for a woman's voice to let the E and the F before the transition to the head notes find a sounding-board on the hard palate as well as on the head sounding-boards. A dark vowel will hit the hard palate; an open vowel will hit the vault.

Are registers and sounding-boards connected?

No, each stands by itself, but they blend when rightly used.

The complications of women's voices arise out of the constant use and change between three registers and three sounding-boards.

Can men use head notes?

Men, using almost throughout the whole length of their voices one register and one sounding-board, and using a second register and sounding-board only for their top notes, can, it is true, use head notes also. But to do this is to

employ the so-called falsetto, which is done only for the sake of comic effects or by singers who, having difficulties in producing high notes, resort to faking them with falsetto.

Garcia's books were written at the beginning of his career as a teacher, and surely he never taught Jenny Lind, nor my mother, nor any other pupil of that period to change into head register on middle C.

Having discovered a method, he must have improved it by experience all the time, and he probably forgot later in life to record this experience in writing. Those who will read my mother's method or have questioned her pupils, must know that there was never a doubt about the limit of the medium register and about F♯ as a start for the head notes.

As regards E and F at the top of the second register of women's voices, very special mention must be made of a difficulty that arises there. In some voices E and F are not easily kept down in the second register. The larynx will try to rise into the third register, using the third sounding-board.

Several reasons can be given for this. Firstly, illness or wrong treatment of the voice, which is bound to lead to its ruin. Secondly, youth. Too young a larynx often cannot take E and F in the medium register. In this case, these two notes may not be practised at all and the voice may only be worked to top E♭ in the medium register. The E and F must only be included in the exercises when they fit into the medium register quite easily by themselves, as they will do after regular practice on the notes below. If the singer is altogether too young, the whole training must be deferred until the larynx itself has sufficiently developed to start its work. It is very exceptional for a girl to be able to sing at the age of fifteen or sixteen. Generally the larynx cannot do its work before the eighteenth year is reached, and in some cases even that is too early,

owing to lack of general physical development. As for the larynx in particular, it is only fully developed at twenty-five, according to Dr. Fauvel.

If, in the highest notes from F♯ on, the third register is not used, the destruction of the high notes will work downwards and the voice will be ruined, semitone by semitone, to be restored only by rest at first and then by most careful work in the lower part of the voice, not going beyond D or E♭ at the top. Some voices, especially sopranos, after forcing the highest notes, show a weakening of the low medium tones. Contraltos generally lose the top notes first when misused.

E and F, and sometimes also the D and C♯, can fail to respond when a voice has been badly trained to bring the head register down into the medium. The top notes of the medium, having been used and placed in the third register, become rooted there, and it is one of the most difficult tasks, needing time and great patience on the part of both pupil and teacher, to restore the medium register in all its compass.

Here also, as in many other cases, the greatest harm can be done by trying to force the right method upon a larynx that has worked for a long time in the wrong one. The change must be effected slowly and carefully to avoid injuries. In the attempt to restore a voice too quickly it may be ruined for good and all. The process is like that of swallowing at once a whole bottle of a dangerous medicine that would have had a healing effect taken drop by drop. Or better still, if by cruel treatment, illness, or other circumstances, a limb of the body had been for years in a wrong position, you could never restore it to its proper place by a quick action without injuring the muscles perhaps for ever.

In men's voices there are no really great difficulties to overcome, except nasal or throaty production. If they

begin at once by singing normally in their natural chest voice, covering their top notes and using the right sounding-boards, there is little to correct and the training may take its normal course. But women find difficulties everywhere. Mischief may be done along the whole range of their voices. A man cannot sing throughout his whole range in head voice; at any rate, this is a rare occurrence and is done only in ignorance. Women, on the other hand, can carry their chest register high up into the medium, imitating men, and they often do so with disastrous results. Again, they can take low notes in the medium register instead of using chest voice. Weakening of the voice will follow, and the development of the other registers will be hampered. Also, they can continue the medium into the head register, failing to observe the change on the F♯. This, too, must inevitably destroy the voice. Lastly, women can, as I said before, use the head register downward and all along their range, in which case the voice will melt and disappear.

In the section entitled "Sounding-Boards" it will be seen how even the use of the wrong sounding-boards will injure the voice.

When I speak of F♯ as the first head note for women, and of E♭, E, and F, etc., for the covered notes of men, I always refer to low pitch. In high pitch, which makes a difference of a semitone, the registers must be transposed accordingly.

Can people possess voices and use them naturally without having been taught?

Yes, there are a few exceptional voices in the world which seem to have been placed in the right positions by nature. They are the product of a perfect formation of the whole instrument and its surroundings, of a perfect relationship between voice and sounding-boards. With most singers, however, teaching alone is capable of placing the voice correctly.

Even where nature has placed a voice to perfection it must be trained, because, as it also lies within its capacity to do the wrong thing, the right method must be shown in order that singing, exercised with full knowledge of the rules, may maintain the voice in perfect condition until life is extinct or health fails.

4. SOUNDING-BOARDS

When the breath is properly taken and sound produced, where does it go?

The air carrying the sound that leaves the inner larynx can escape through the mouth or nose.

Which is the right channel to be used?

For singing, only the mouth.

Why not the nose?

Because the sound must find sounding-boards on its way out, and the inside of the nose cannot act as a sounding-board.

The nasal bone, which, together with the frontal and facial bones, is a sounding-board, is not touched when sound is sent through the front nostrils. Another reason why the nose must be avoided as an escape of sound is that the voice passing through this channel acquires an ugly, unæsthetic quality.

What is a sounding-board?

A body capable of receiving sound and of vibrating when touched by the sound-waves. The material of which the sounding-board is made partly determines the quality and quantity of sound produced. Instruments constructed to make comic or weird noises have sounding-boards of various materials and shapes.

What material is best for a fine, noble sound?

Vibrating glass, brass, wood, or bone may form a sounding-board. Such materials as marble, cement, or stone

kill sonority, as they cannot vibrate and thus repulse sound-waves.

Cardboard, woolly, or other soft materials are bad, as, being incapable of vibration, they deaden and muffle the sounds that meet them. Consequently, sounding-boards of instruments are chosen from wood, metal, or bone.

Which, then, is the sounding-board for the human voice?

For the interior sounding-board there is only bone.

For exterior sounding-boards the surroundings will vibrate according to the nature of the objects that fill the room.

Which are man's interior sounding-boards used in singing?

Every bone that lies in the vicinity or surroundings of the larynx serves as a sounding-board. The chest and collar bones give sonority and vibrate with the chest notes of both men and women, where the larynx stands at its lowest.

In the medium voice of women (second register) there would always be a variety of impossible tone-colours if the sound were not sent straight to the hard palate (front palate behind the upper front teeth).

The back part of the palate (bearing the uvula), being soft, cannot be used except for the production of certain effects demanding weak, colourless tones.

What sounding-board is used for woman's third, the head, register?

By sending the head note high up at the back, opposite the uvula, the tones strike the vault of the pharynx connected with the nose and frontal bones, as well as with the whole skull. The head voice is so called because of its resonance in the head bones.

Where do men's voices find their sounding-boards?

Man sings from his lowest to his highest note in his first, or chest register, all the vibrating chest and neck bones acting as sounding-boards.

When he covers his chest tones above E♭, E♮ or F, the vault of the pharynx becomes his sounding-board, and partly the hard palate. If he uses falsetto, his tones also vibrate in the frontal, nose, and skull bones, like the head notes of women.

Can one sing without sounding-boards?

Certainly not; no instrument can do without them. The singer, too, must look out for the most advantageous vibration, both interior and exterior.

How does a singer find his sounding-boards?

Only by being shown by a wise instructor or, if very clever, by following closely the instructions put down here.

The sounding-boards are found in pronouncing certain vowels, and the voice must be trained to place every note in its proper register, supported by its own sounding-board.

In the first, the chest register, men and women must use the Italian *ah*. In singing out a full, deep note on *ah*, the first sounding-board will be struck If the hand is placed flat on the sternum near the collar-bone, the vibrations of these bones will be felt in the hollow of the hand.

The vowels *i*, *eu*, *ou*, and *oh* (Italian pronunciation) would crush the chest tones and produce an irritating pressure. The pupil must learn to manage all the vowels equal to *ah* in the chest register.

This refers especially to female voices. Men, who sing their whole scale in chest voice, easily manage not to cover and accentuate dark vowels until they reach the point where covering is required.

Women, who change into the medium (second) register on about E or F, sing a whole octave to the top F♯ exclusively in one register. In changing from chest to medium, they use the French *u* or German *ü*, resembling the Italian *i*, but placed behind the front teeth, keeping the lips limp and dropping the lower jaw. The higher they sing the wider they must open their mouths, thus giving more space

for the vibrations to escape through contact with the hard palate.

Passing into the head notes on F♯, the chin must be dropped completely and the mouth opened wide. For this, the third register, a clear open *ah* must be pronounced in order to strike the third sounding-board (the bone forming the end of the spine, called the vault of the pharynx and connected with all the skull bones).

If this sounding-board is not struck, and force is applied, the larynx will fall back into the second position, and the inner network of the arytenoid muscles and cartilages will be working in opposition to the muscles that decide the three positions of the larynx. Great effort will ensue, and the consequence will be vocal derangement.

The inner working of the sound-producing muscles must be in constant harmony with the working of the lifting muscles.

The use of the wrong sounding-boards is not so detrimental to the voice as the misapplication of the registers, but its avoidance is of high importance, as no muscles can develop unaided by sounding-boards.

Men, in running up the scale, change their sounding-board but once and so find much less difficulty than women, who are faced with a threefold change of register and sounding-board. For men the *ah* goes on undisturbed until they come to the notes which require covering. The change from open to covered chest notes will easily be acquired by changing the *ah* into a dark vowel like *i* (Italian), or *e*, *o*, or *u* (Italian). The vowel best suited to that purpose must be chosen, as the case may require.

Should a man cover all his voice instead of only the top notes, it will never develop, but shrink and deteriorate. If he opens his top notes, using the first, or chest, sounding-board, he may lose his voice and in any case develop a terrific tremolo.

If a woman covers her chest notes, the pressure thus exercised on the whole larynx to keep it in the first register and the use of the hard palate instead of the chest bones as sounding-board will muffle the voice and even produce laryngitis and other inflammations. If she uses her chest sounding-board on *ah* for the second register without leaving the first chest register, she will simply go up the scale in chest voice, like a man. If she uses the third sounding-board for the second register, she will sing medium in head voice, and if she uses the second sounding-board (the hard palate) by singing dark vowels on her head notes, she will ruin her voice by sending it back to the second (medium) position.

It is because all these faults are committed that one constantly hears of voices which have been ruined.

The modern composer invents new instruments if he wishes to produce certain effects that no existing instrument can render; but the human instrument cannot be transformed for the sake of modern composers. It is the composer who must submit to the larynx as he does to the existing instruments; but as flesh and blood can be made obedient to will-power for a time, composers take advantage of this dangerous capacity and thus sacrifice the singer. They too often contrive to bring about the ruin of vocalists who, for fear of losing their bread, comply with all the monstrous demands made upon the sacred treasury of their voice. To force a woman to pronounce *i*, *o*, *u* (Italian) in the third, head register is to ask her to use her second register (medium) in order to give the real value to those vowels—a disastrous procedure.

I advise composers to spare the highest register of women's voices by avoiding those deadly vowels, and I advise singers in no circumstances to sing anything but *ah* above F♯, whatever the conductors or composers may say. They will not restore their lost voices when they have been sacrificed on the altar of blind obedience.

Harshaw was very proud of being able to sing a clear "i" vowel on a high G and beyond Perhaps dangerous!

Throughout my life I have never pronounced anything but *ah* on high notes, and it has never been noticed, nor has any one complained. As a result my voice, after thirty-eight years of singing, has remained fresh and young, and so should every one else's.

Are there any mobile sounding-boards?

No. They are part of the body and cannot move. A bone that is not absolutely attached to the skeleton, and which vibrates in a certain measure through contact, is the lower jawbone, which is only hooked into the mask. Bones independent of the vocal instrument can vibrate when struck by sound-waves, as objects in a room where music is performed are set in vibration.

Are there cases of voices which go naturally to the right sounding-boards and use the right registers?

Yes, but very few.

Many people, ignorant of anything concerning singing—and I include some of the singing teachers—say: "Birds do not spoil their voices, why should we?" But birds have only one way of using their voice and cannot add to or alter what nature gave them. Nature provides for speech in man, a gift she bestows on everybody; but it is art that provides for singing, which is the reason why it must be taught and learned. Even when it comes to declamation, art must step in. You cannot speak on the stage as you would speak in the ordinary way. Your voice must be trained to sustain sound and must be able to carry.

One often meets actors who have ruined their voices by speech alone. What have they done?

They strained and forced through sheer ignorance of the limits set to the quantity of voice that may be used without dangerous consequences. By forcing, many very well-known dramatic artists in all countries have fallen victims to the dreaded nodules, and it is only too easy to detect by their husky, forced tones that they have been operated on.

Does the larynx help to send the notes to the sounding-boards?

No, the larynx fulfils its own functions regardless of anything else.

Could one sing without sounding-boards?

One can produce sound, but it would not be heard.

Is it detrimental to sing without a sounding-board?

Singing with bad sounding-boards, exterior or interior, is attended by serious consequences. To sing without them would simply be to kill sound.

Every one who sings or plays soon knows if the hall, theatre, or room in which he performs possesses good or bad acoustics. Good acoustics are the outcome of the presence of sympathetic sounding-boards; bad acoustics are the consequence of non-vibrating surroundings.

The singer and the instrumentalist strive to perform under the best possible conditions. If it is a trial to appear before an uneducated public, it is a most disheartening ordeal to sing or play without good acoustics. Sometimes help will come unexpectedly when all hope seems lost, and again, one may have to sing in a room or hall which one's eyes condemn before one has uttered a sound. One day, at the beginning of my career, I was engaged to sing at a party. On entering the house I found it exceptionally small, but hoped that the drawing-room would be spacious. Unfortunately this was not the case. Besides, there were heavy carpets and hangings which made me fear for the worst. The guests were standing and, having no platform, I had to sing straight into the crowd. My programme was varied by a small band of Hungarian players, who gave selections between my numbers. Among their instruments was a cymbalom, a very large sounding-board covered by numerous strings, as used in Hungary. When I started to sing, looking out desperately for some vibrating surface, I instinctively turned my head towards the band at the

end of the room. Suddenly I felt a response to my singing: my voice sounded surprisingly clear. At that moment I did not grasp the reason of so unexpected a blessing, but during my second number it dawned upon me that those Hungarian instruments, especially the cymbalom, were giving a splendid support.

At another party, held at Lord Iveagh's house, I experienced a similar acoustic surprise. Entering a beautifully decorated drawing-room, Kennerley Rumford and I were horrified at the sight of the marble walls, carpets, tapestries, and heavy curtains. Pancera, who was the pianist, had brought her own instrument. When we sang, accompanied on the piano belonging to the house, the silent open grand made for us a delightful sounding-board, relieving our anxiety and offering us a hospitality of acoustics the house itself did not possess.

These and other occasions gave birth to an idea I never had time to pursue—to have lutes and harps constructed which could be lent as sounding-boards to houses or halls having poor acoustic properties. They could be hung on doors and walls and thus replace the missing sympathetic vibrations always so welcome to artists.

Our inner sounding-boards cannot, unfortunately, be improved by the addition of artificial sounding-boards to the existing ones. I sometimes amused myself, though, by trying to invent some light metal sounding-plate which, placed in the mouth, might produce new tone effects. But I have no time and leave this invention to others.

There are cases where sounding-boards will not only leave us unaided, but will actually interfere with the progress of vocal training. This happens when one of the bones made to form a sounding-board is decayed or undeveloped. I have not met with the latter case, but it undoubtedly exists. The former I did meet, however. One of my schoolfellows, a French girl, was born with a defective hard palate, and so

were her sister and brothers, the parents being cousins. This girl could only speak with the greatest effort, and had to let her voice find its way out through the nose.

Mrs. Brown,[1] the possessor of a fine contralto voice and a generally intelligent and musical woman, started to work with me. I found that she could only sing with ease up to the middle D. Above this note the most patient work could not obtain progress. As I had often conquered such cases previously, I started confidently with my usual exercises. However, to my amazement, whilst the chest and low middle notes improved, the upper middle register remained absolutely unchanged. My conclusion was soon formed. As the E♭ in the upper middle register of woman not only relies on the help of the hard palate, but also begins to approach the third sounding-boards slightly, I concluded that there was a stoppage connected with the nose or frontal bone, for I was certain that there was no growth or thickened muscular membrane in the nose. I sent her to a throat and nose specialist, and my emotions and scientific satisfaction can easily be guessed when she told me that the doctor corroborated my conclusions and sent me his compliments for having discovered, through the voice, an interesting case.

Mrs. Brown had had a fall as a child and the doctor found that the frontal bone near the nasal bone had been injured, and had afterwards decayed. Thus it had become useless as a sounding-board, and could give no help and no response to the notes to which it ought to have vibrated.

Growth, defect, or decay affecting one of the bones necessary to the vibration of the sounds is bound to act as a brake acts upon a revolving wheel. It slows down the motion or stops it entirely. The doctor suggested an operation, and after the piece of decayed bone had been removed, the high notes became easy and the whole voice

[1] To-day singing teacher at the Calgary (Canada) Academy.

normal. This demonstrates clearly the high importance of the sounding-boards.

If illness is the cause of a defect, there is generally a way of removing it by curing the illness; but if, by some cruel decree of nature, one of our sounding-boards is completely misconstructed, there is nothing to be done.

Mrs. F., the wife of a painter, came to me for lessons. She was a Rossetti type, tall and queenly. Although her voice was neither powerful nor high, I thought I might improve it by work. There was something strange in the quality that struck me as unusual, but I thought this would be removed if I got her to understand the use of the sounding-boards. I told her I could not promise anything definite for the future, but that after twelve lessons I should be able to give her an opinion. Her voice developed rapidly into a dramatic soprano and her personality indicated that she would be able to sing important parts. While her voice was progressing and her head notes growing splendidly, her medium registers remained childlike and feeble. With all my art, which has often made voices out of scanty material, I could not improve her medium. This had never happened to me before. One day, puzzled beyond description, I looked into her mouth and saw that her palate was completely flat. It had no dome and consequently no resonance. Her chest notes, vibrating to a perfect chest-bone sounding-board, were normal. Her head notes, working to a vault of the pharynx as well as frontal and head bones in perfect condition, sounded normal and grew. But the medium tones were only ugly; they sounded comic. I had to advise her to give up singing, but though she did not believe me, she must surely have been forced to do so, for she was never heard of.

Another interesting case, in which the two upper registers improved and the lower one failed to show progress, was that of an affected chest bone on which abscesses had

formed at regular intervals. I managed to make an accomplished singer of this person, but her lower notes will only find complete development when her general health improves and her complaint is removed.

Yet another case, where a girl with a marvellously strong voice had such weak chest tones that they could hardly be heard, was, I concluded, due to a tuberculous chest bone, and my diagnosis was found to be correct.

There are fashions in the world of singing teachers. It is extraordinary how quickly false rumours find their way to the ears of all. Thus one hears to-day all the newcomers from America, Milan, or Berlin talk about "no registers," "five registers," "breathless singing," or the production of the "voix blanche" (white voice). All of which means that all sound should be thrown back to the soft palate, and the chest and medium sounding-boards avoided, and only the head register and sounding-board used. Of late Milan has sent me many such cases, as many almost as Paris has of nasal production.

Every one will understand that there may be some passages in songs or operas where these fairy-like, white, and disembodied sounds may be of good effect, but it will also dawn on every one that this colour cannot by any means always be used.

The nasal method that has spread all over the world from Nice and New York is not only anti-æsthetic, but dangerous to the human voice. The section, "Foundation of a New Religion," in Chapter II, will furnish details of it. In sending sound through the nose instead of directing it towards the sounding-boards that give it beauty and life, we convey it through the very channel that should be avoided at all costs. It was given to us by nature for an entirely different purpose. The inner nose is formed of cartilage, which, like cardboard or wool, cannot offer any resonance. Singing thus without sounding-boards, we subject the voice to a cruel strain

without obtaining any result, except that of destruction. Big, healthy sound sustained by the sounding-boards, on the other hand, is, as few people suspect, a great power. Vibration produced by the perfectly clear tone of a human voice can produce wonders.

A great tenor of the early Victorian period possessed a very powerful upper D, so powerful indeed that, as my father told me, on striking this note, which was his finest, he would split a tumbler tuned to D by singing this note at the other end of the room.

A singing teacher of the same period is related to have been possessed by the wild desire to impart to his pupils a colossal resonance. Power was his ideal, but how to obtain it he was not at all sure. One thing he knew: a bleating calf calling to its mother shows wonderful powers of sonority.

How did that calf do it? He did not know, but he inferred, and not without some reason, that it owed its voice to the large bones in the head. So he came to the conclusion that every pupil should study the anatomy of a calf's head. When Mr. S. went to him for his first lesson, great was his astonishment when in answer to his ringing of a silver bell, a footman entered, dressed in blue velvet, gloved and powdered, and bearing a tray on which he presented the new pupil with a calf's head surrounded by an array of carving-knives of different sizes. The teacher then proceeded to cut that head into many parts, showing the spellbound pupil the mouth and bones, at the same time explaining that, this animal possessing such abnormal capacities of sound production, he would have to learn to dissect it in the most minute detail, so as to be able to understand the why and wherefore of its bleating. Also, to try to find in himself such bones and cavities as would help him to acquire the same qualities as the said calf. The pupil found this strange, but thought that perhaps after the

first lesson this anatomical demonstration might be turned into useful meditation. However, he fled horror-stricken when at the beginning of the third lesson the same footman brought in the third calf's head. About to slam the door, he called out: "And to think that I paid you for singing lessons when you make me do the work of a butcher, without allowing me to utter one sound!" To which the teacher replied: "Farewell. I can see that you will never be a singer."

5. VIBRATION

How many vibrations do we observe in singing?

The first is the vibration of the vocal cords themselves through the pressure of breath.

The second vibration is that of the sounding-boards when struck by the sound.

The third vibration takes place in the locality in which we sing, where the sounds formed by the two vibrations of the vocal cords and sounding-boards meet sympathetic vibrating materials.

To produce perfect sonority the three vibrating factors must work together. Should one of them fail, sound cannot attain to full beauty or power.

It is of the highest importance for the singer to look out for the best sounding-boards available.

Singers are often particular about the rooms in which they have to sing, but they are rarely particular in the choice of their own sounding-boards.

I must repeat here what I said in the section on Sounding-Boards:

Given bad acoustic conditions, efforts are made; in vibrating surroundings, the singer abandons all effort.

The great principle remains the same: to obtain the greatest quality and quantity with the least effort is the aim of perfect singing.

Singing is gymnastics. Any athlete or sportsman has to know the capacities of his muscles and how to treat them in order to increase their power. Singers and their teachers in general do not understand that the same principles apply to singing as to any sport.

Effort paralyses muscle work.

Acoustics, internal and external, are of the greatest assistance in the creation of vibrations, which are, after all, the makers of sound.

6. THE MOUTH

The mouth is one of the most important factors in singing. It conveys breath and sound and possesses among its bones that highly important one, the hard palate.

This arched bone is the principal sounding-board for the second (medium) register, in a woman's voice.

How shall one open the mouth for singing?

There is a general impression that the mouth is capable of opening in two ways, top and jaw; but the upper part of the mouth is immovable, as it belongs to the skull.

When you tell a person to open the mouth, you generally see only their lips parted; but to open the mouth for singing, the chin must be dropped.

As all our nerves must be relaxed, and all parts of the body free from contraction, whilst singing, so must our lips be completely limp. This loosening of the lips, accompanied by the lowering of the jaw, gives, when not exaggerated, an oval shape to the mouth.

The higher one sings, the lower must the jaw drop, and on no pretext may the mouth be enlarged sideways, as this would inevitably involve a smile or an expression of terror.

The singer must keep control of his body and soul: nothing must be left to chance.

In singing exercises, the mouth and face must show no expression. It will be time to smile or to grin when

interpretation demands it. Smiles displace the vowel values and throw the voice back to the soft palate, where it loses beauty, power, and resonance.

To practise with a certain facial contortion would be to fix that expression for ever on the singer's features, and we should thus have to contemplate a laughing Donna Anna bent on her father's corpse, if smiling had been taught, as we should see a crying Carmen singing "Close by the Ramparts of Seville" if a stern mask had been forced upon the pupil during the whole training—and we have seen both.

7. SEX AND VOICE

Where does the fundamental difference between the voices of men and women lie?

There are male teachers who insist that registers do not exist, and turning to the woman pupil ask: "Why should there be a difference between your voice and mine? Go ahead and sing as I do. Why do you move your larynx? Mine does not move. Put your hand on your larynx, keep it steadily down, and you will sing as I do."

That means that the pupil is taught to sing throughout her voice in the first, that is, the chest register, instead of changing twice.

Why do women change registers?

Because, belonging to another sex, their voices work differently.

What has sex to do with the voice?

Everything. To begin with, the human larynx is in close connection with the sexual parts, and its growth, development, formation, and capacities are derived from the development of sex. To enter into intimate details is not possible, but every doctor or thinking person will understand.

Can men have women's voices, and vice versa?

Men and women start life with undeveloped sex. Both

therefore have practically the same voices, and this is the reason why boys' voices can be used in the place of developed women's voices up to a certain age.

Sex is not developed in a child, and if by a surgical operation it is prevented from ever developing the voice will remain that of childhood throughout life. Boys will, in consequence, sing with female voices, and girls keep their child voices. In both cases, the progressive development of the voice will be completely arrested and mutation will never take place in the boy's voice.

Occasions to observe the first case are numerous enough. On the other hand, a girl's voice will not show the excessive change of a boy's at the critical age; but if a certain sexual operation is performed on an undeveloped girl, she also will keep the voice of her childhood.

When normal girls develop, their voices simply ripen and become strong enough to undertake real work. Boys' voices drop a whole octave when developing. The operation performed on boys which deprives them for ever of the possibility of becoming normal men, was unfortunately practised for many centuries, for the sake of keeping their voices as they were and procuring them a livelihood by the singing of women's parts. Church and theatre alike used *castrati*, as these men were called, for singing soprano or contralto, as at that time women did not perform in public.

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century the fashion of employing *castrati* disappeared. When Madame Pauline Viardot took up the part of Orpheus so brilliantly, she tore it from the hands of the last *castrato*. In recent years, tenors have ventured to make this part their own, but as my ears are accustomed to the rich, luscious notes of contraltos, I should prefer to hear a baritone in the part.

Boys' voices also refuse to change if nature happens to have played one of its cruel tricks by allowing the child to be born without the possibility of sexual development.

Another of nature's most unwelcome jests is that there can be children possessing attributes of both sexes. But to discuss the voice of such a case is for me an impossibility, as I never yet met with one, though I hope one day to carry out experiments with the help of friendly doctors.

Only recently it came to my notice through a pamphlet by Dr. E. Krauss (Paris), presented to the French Medical Academy, that not all eunuchoid voices necessarily belong to sexless men. He made a most important discovery, which I will explain here, as it shows clearly that a man can keep a boy's voice and be a normally developed man at the same time. Dr. Krauss explains as follows:

At the time of puberty, a boy's voice breaks and assumes sometimes the character of the voice of a eunuch. The explanation generally given was that this phenomenon was due to spasms or ataxic movements of the laryngeal muscles, but Dr. Krauss found that the real reason of the vocal perturbation came from a different source. According to him, the eunuchoid voice, which has nothing to do with the voice of a eunuch, although it resembles it entirely, is due to a disparity between the development of the vocal cords and the development of the cartilages of the larynx. The latter, too much developed in the anterior-posterior direction, keep the cords continually stretched, even without muscular contraction. Any muscular contraction attempted then produces overstretching, with the result of a childlike, eunuchoid voice.

Dr. Krauss has invented a device by which he trains the laryngeal cartilage to keep down whilst sound is produced, and by repeating several times a short treatment such as that described, the larynx is placed in a normal position for ever, and the person thus treated speaks with a perfect male voice.

My mother had one case, and one only, of a girl brought to her at the Vienna Conservatoire, possessing a sketch of

a fine contralto voice. Finding that she could obtain no progress at all, she thought that her larynx must be undeveloped, and stopped the lessons.

Many years later, she received quite a shock when recognizing in a young man bowing and taking off his hat to her a strange resemblance to that contralto pupil. A mutual friend afterwards explained the case to my mother, and told her that the young man was married. This was a case of undetermined sex up to a certain age.

If an adult meets with an accident injuring a sexual part, does this necessarily bring about a change in his voice?

No. If otherwise the injury has not destroyed his health and the normal functions of his whole body, the voice will remain where it was before the accident.

Does the girl's voice undergo the same changes?

The same rule is here observed. If the girl-child is seriously injured and her inner organs destroyed, her voice will for ever remain undeveloped; but once she has reached the age when the larynx is fully developed, no accident of the kind discussed could alter her voice.

Does the change that takes place in boys occur suddenly?

All boys do not change at the same age; Oriental or southern people experiencing earlier development than those of the north. The same applies to girls.

Can one detect the change taking place in the speaking voice?

With boys, certainly, as their speaking voices break.

When should a boy cease singing?

He may sing until he hears his speaking voice giving way. Then the singing will have to come to a standstill. But more about this later on.

If a boy should go on singing throughout his change, what would be the consequences?

In most cases he would ruin his voice for ever.

A vivid example of this was Gounod. He sang divinely,

but with a veiled, hoarse voice. He told me one day how he lost it. As a child he sang soprano in his church choir. So wonderful was his singing that when the time came to stop, the choirmaster could not bring himself to let him go. The consequences were cruel: he could never sing again except for his intimate friends. Gounod kept a husky voice all his life, but those who never heard him sing religious music with those tones have not touched the mystery beyond.

Does a girl lose her voice through singing early?

If her body and vocal organs are weak, the loss of her voice can become permanent. Less delicate girls may be injured in a smaller degree, but even with the best training they will generally be denied the full power and development they might have been originally intended to attain.

Here again, exceptions may be met with, but they are rare. Even Patti came to grief, being obliged to stop singing at the age of fourteen and rest completely for two years, after which time the world was able to admire her beautiful voice once more.

Boys and girls speak alike, using three registers. After settling down to maturity, the boy speaks in chest voice only, except when making fun; the girl continues to use her voice in the three registers, but there are exceptions.

Voice categories may generally be recognized even by the speaking voice. Here also exceptions occur, however. Patti used to speak with full deep chest tones, and Queen Victoria, who possessed a powerful contralto, spoke with the same deep chest tones as Patti, who had a soprano voice. Clara Butt and I both speak in a strong chest voice, yet she is a contralto whilst I am a soprano.

When must a girl stop singing?

A girl may sing until about eleven or twelve in her natural childish way, but must stop using her voice entirely until well advanced in development. Rest is needed from

the age of twelve to eighteen. Here also exceptions can be allowed, provided that great care be exercised.

In my whole career as a teacher—that is during thirty-eight years—I had only two cases I could start with at the age of fifteen. On the other hand, I met many girls whom I could not allow to begin studying before even eighteen.

Boys should never start before eighteen.

What is the sure sign for a teacher that he may proceed safely with the training of a young voice?

Progress. Strain, deriving from immaturity as well as from disease, excludes all progress. An advance in quantity, quality, and range is the only sure barometer to guide the teacher.

The moment the teacher detects that progress stops, his full attention must concentrate upon this fact and the reasons must be discovered.

The degree of progress is the test of good teaching. For women to sing too soon after giving birth to a child is most dangerous. Six weeks' rest is required. Not every woman can share the good fortune of Schumann-Heink, who for lack of bread and driven by a cruel, drunken husband, had to sing a few days after the birth of each child. She must have had a special guardian angel to save her voice.

A young mother should never dance, ride, play games, or sing before her body is well restored and rested, especially if she wishes to be a professional singer.

I must now touch upon another delicate question, although reluctantly, for I came to teach and help. To be useful to others is my life's aim, and I must therefore speak frankly.

From time to time, a new pupil asks me if it is true that to be an artist one must have loved, and if, to be a fully developed singer, it is necessary to be married, actually or left-handedly. To this I can only answer that a teacher who is able to utter in your presence such a horrible thought, which, besides being an utter lie, is a monstrous assumption,

should be handed over to justice. How many a happy life of stupid, inexperienced, innocent girls has been ruined and broken by such callous turning of innocent joys into days of torture! If you have neither heart nor imagination, it is not a vulgar love affair that will reveal to you the secrets of art. If you had always to go through death, murder, prison, and flirtations to be able to render them on the stage, life would not be worth living, art not worth while, and you would do better to start a nice hosiery shop instead. I do not say that motherhood does not deepen a woman's heart; but even here, if that heart cannot love, no child will ever be able to awaken it. Some of our pupils have been great singers and emotional artists without ever having had a lover or being married. These fairy-tales are told to innocent young girls by the Don Juans of the teaching profession. Let them be told clearly that art and its enchantments are found in a much higher sphere than a man's arms.

8. HYGIENE OF THE VOICE

Two points are to be observed here:

(1) Your body must be kept in perfect condition.

(2) You must possess the one true method.

Beside these two fundamental principles, and really involving them, there are rules you will have to obey if you wish to sing.

Everything detrimental to your body will be detrimental to your voice. The body and the larynx are one.

Drink, drugs, and exhausting sports, walking, dancing, or swimming, will all be followed by evil consequences, if exaggerated.

The dangers of starving yourself to preserve your figure are great. Anything weakening or exciting will be fatal.

Know yourself and guide yourself. Character as well as

bodily health is most important. Any dangerous habits you cherish must be sacrificed if you care to succeed.

I must especially warn Americans against iced drinks and candies. Anything cold, let alone iced, endangers the larynx and the chest, and it should be particularly avoided after singing. It is often an ordeal to resist a cooling drink after a big opera performance, but there is no choice. A very celebrated dramatic soprano of the Prague Opera House died three days after singing Brünnhilde at Trieste and drinking iced beer after the performance. Certainly the thirst provoked by singing for several consecutive hours before the public is hard to overcome, but hot tea or coffee can be of great assistance.

I need not insist on facts known to the whole world. The regular use of alcohol, which seemingly heightens the singer's gifts for a given time, will soon produce fatal results. In many cases life itself will be endangered—not only the voice.

It is ever an amazing spectacle for the philosophical onlooker to see man, who dreads death, rush into its arms. The slow suicide caused by an unhealthy rule of life brings him before his time to that dark portal he hopes never to pass. Such is mankind.

Ask real sportsmen, dancers, or acrobats—in fact, any person who lives and works by a special training of muscles —whether they could ever hope to achieve success if they did not drink alcohol very sparingly.

Chest disease. Doctors have often sent me persons showing signs of weak lungs. They advised them to sing, thinking that exercise would improve the respiratory organs. Singing requires deep breathing.

Breathing deeply means expanding the lungs to their utmost capacity. If the lungs are affected, they cannot thus expand, and until a cure is effected by other means the breathing exercises made in singing will be of little use. They will be detrimental to vocal work, on the other hand,

because to sing with a smaller quantity of air than is required for the easy, normal production of sound is a real effort, and no effort can be attended by good results.

The case of Clara Clemens, Mark Twain's daughter, is related in my book, *The Singer's Pilgrimage.* I accepted her as a pupil only after she had undergone a six months' cure that permitted her to start her studies with me. All the same, I could not refrain from warning her that she would never reach such lung-power as is required for a career.

Here I cannot refrain from mentioning a delightful anecdote. Although the elder sister, Olivia, had been my pupil, I wondered why Clara had decided to come to me, and I asked her if Leschetizky, who was then her piano teacher, had advised her in this matter. Laughingly she said: " No; it is the voice of the world and my father that brought me to you. As to Leschetizky, I must tell you what he said, if you will promise not to be offended. He said: 'Miss Clemens, I will answer you with a little story. There was in a small Russian town where I lived, a baker's shop where year in and year out the loveliest pastry was made. One day, at Easter, the baker's wife opened the door of the shop and held out a big tray with sweet-smelling Easter cakes to cool them. A very orthodox Jew who was passing by, stopped in front of the shop and, breathing in deeply the delightful smell of the hot pastry which his religion did not allow him to touch, as it was made in a Christian shop, he sighed, and said to the baker's wife: " What a lovely smell! A pity I cannot have them." The woman replied: "Little father, why not thus become a Christian?" "Ah," said the Jew; " why shall I go to the Son as long as the Father is alive? " ' And so, by this story," said Clara, " he advised me to go to your mother. I decided otherwise, and here I am."

Coming back to singing with weak lungs, when the evil

is not far gone, and provided the surrounding air is good and the person is well nourished, singing can fortify such cases. One thing singing does which has a far-reaching influence, is that it makes a person happy, and if one is able to breathe well, to sing steadily, and pitch clearly, that happy feeling, linked with a heightened appetite produced by the action of singing, will surely have beneficial effects.

In certain nervous cases of a superficial nature, the happiness derived from singing has produced excellent results; but it cannot be said to cure bronchial or lung trouble directly.

In serious mental cases even progress or success is of no avail in preventing the dreaded final outbreak of the illness.

I have observed in some epileptic cases that the vocal work was very slow, the nerves of the throat being even more affected by existing epilepsy than by incipient madness. When an epileptic pupil shows signs of an attack, I am always able to stop it instantly by the treatment taught me by the great Swedish expert in manual treatment, Dr. Kelgreen. After two minutes of a certain massage on the neck, the pupil can resume the lesson. I know this to be a very painful experience; but what does that matter, as long as one may bring some alleviation to a sufferer.

I now intend to mention something which has nothing whatever to do with the voice, in any direct sense; but it may be of interest that I have been able, with the aid of this method of Dr. Kelgreen, to bring many people back to life, and to stop epileptic, or even fainting, attacks in streets, churches, and trains, or wherever I met cases.

Everybody should learn ways and means to lighten the suffering of humanity, and surely the feeling of having helped our brethren is not the least to give us happiness. This applies eminently to the teaching of singing, the most

satisfactory of activities, since it enables us to create self-reliant beings who by spreading art help to increase the capital of joy and beauty in this vale of tears.

9. QUALITY AND CLASSIFICATION OF VOICES

What decides the classification of voices?

Its colour—generally called Timbre.

How can one detect colour in a voice?

One must be born with the most refined gifts of hearing, as painters are born with the most intense gifts of sight.

As we see visible things with the eye, so the ear must be able to detect sound, which is invisible, but can be heard, fixed, and followed with our brain. Those endowed with an acute musical sense of hearing will not only be able to tell the slightest differences between all the instruments made by the hand of man and all the noises produced by nature, but they will be able and must be able, if they wish to become teachers, to detect even the slightest differences in the colours of human voices.

There are dark and bright voices. There are fine and ugly voices. Some voices are as though cut out in stone, unable to modulate or to express any human feeling. Others can translate all the soul's emotions and transmit them to the hearer.

What is it that makes the quality of a voice?

The length, the breadth of the vocal cords as well as their flexibility. Also the size and depth of the bones forming the sounding-boards, and the quality of those bones.

Which are the principal bones that help to form the quality of a sound?

This is fully explained in the section entitled "Sounding-Boards," but here is a brief summary:

The chest and collar bones for the first position.

The roof of the mouth or hard palate and certain vibrating facial bones for the medium.

The bones called the vault of the pharynx, situated at the end of the spine and lying opposite the two back nostrils, in direct communication with all the bones of the head, viz. skull, frontal bone, and nose bone.

And lastly, the general conformation of the throat, pharynx, and respiratory organs.

Once voices have been recognized by their qualities, how are they to be classified?

Before they can be classified, they must be brought out, and by the right method, so that their quality and category may be determined. For it may happen that a voice which appeared at first to belong to one category will only be placed by exercises into its right future position and show how it must be treated. This is a very rare occurrence, but it has been known.

Not every voice shows at the very beginning to which category it belongs, and in such a case the teacher must proceed cautiously and not stubbornly to a preconceived judgment, from a wish to appear infallible. Unless the development is closely followed, a fatal mistake is easily made.

More often the definite quality of a voice—soprano or contralto, for example—may be detected at once. Exceptions do not present themselves very often, but it is dangerous not to look out for them with the greatest care. It generally falls to the lot of the future dramatic soprano to be misunderstood by the teacher.

If a teacher has any intelligence, he will soon understand whether the voice that confronts him is a contralto or a light soprano. The depth and dark colour of the former, the easy heights and transparency of the latter, will leave no doubt even after a first hearing. Yet even here I constantly meet with the most distressing cases,

quite inexplicable to me, in which the lightest of sopranos have been taught as contraltos, and vice versa.

That one should have some difficulty in discerning dramatic sopranos in many cases seems more credible, as that type of voice very often cannot take the third register with ease and on the other hand shows a very big medium, and often a very strong first register. This is why teachers so often train a singer erroneously as a contralto.

Where there is facility in high notes from the start, the teacher may be tempted to class the voice as a dramatic soprano, and in hearing a big voice he often commits the mistake of believing that this voice is of great endurance, and may be taught the dramatic soprano repertory immediately after the first exercises. Such a voice deteriorates, and is soon ruined for ever by training of this sort.

In England, where opera is rarely given, the public, and teachers as well, often mistake the quality of the voices. Men's voices are less difficult to classify and generally better understood; but they cannot endure wrong treatment so long as women's voices do.

It is by hearing opera regularly and listening to the different classes of voices employed by composers for the different parts, and provided that no errors are committed in the choice of the artists, that public and teachers can learn to understand the qualities and classification of human voices.

In England you often hear light sopranos singing dramatic music and oratorio as well as opera. It may be an excuse that dramatic sopranos, being generally killed in the cradle and in consequence rare birds, are not easily obtained; but for those who are trained and training on the right lines, it is intolerable to hear the dramatic soprano part in the *Messiah*, to quote only one of the many oratorios sung in England, sung by a light soprano with flute-like tones, wholly unsuited to that gigantic profession of faith: "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

On the operatic stage, Leonora in *Trovatore* is rarely heard from dramatic sopranos in England. Even if managers find such a *rara avis*, this part, like that of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*, requires not only power, but flexibility, which a dramatic soprano can only acquire by work and which is no longer taught these days. No education is more difficult than that of a dramatic soprano.

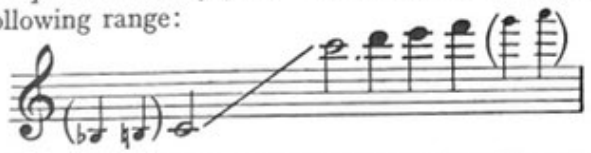
The injuries inflicted on such voices are generally of a more serious nature than those inflicted on a light voice. It is obvious that any heavy muscle in our body when strained or injured will take much longer to heal and to become normal again than a thinner muscle.

It is not always the range that decides the quality of the voice. There are short sopranos and there are high contraltos, and it is not extent of compass that matters, but where the voice works with ease and sounds well.

In the three main categories, soprano, mezzo, and contralto, we can distinguish many sub-categories. There are really six different sopranos, and their possibilities must be perfectly analysed if they are to be given music that will not injure them, and which they will be able to render perfectly.

Gamut of the Female Voices

(1) *Soprano acuto sfogato*, the highest of all, may have the following range:



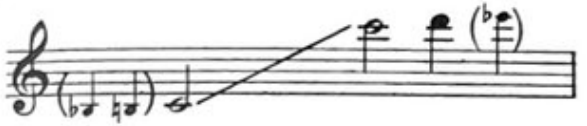
Very few will reach the A in alt, as did the wife and sister-in-law of Mozart, and it is only in his Concert Arias that we meet with these, the highest of notes in a woman's voice. A high light soprano is usually considered as being rare, but most desirable, if it reaches F in alt.

The following operas contain parts illustrating this

category of voice: *The Magic Flute* (Queen of the Night), by Mozart; *Coq d'Or*, by Rimsky-Korsakov; *Il Seraglio*, by Mozart; *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Zerbinetta), by Strauss.

Some of my mother's and my own pupils who possessed the highest ranges are Sybil Sanderson, for whom Massenet wrote *Esclarmonde*, in which she displayed a fine and powerful G in alt, holding it as strongly and as long as she pleased; Mlle. Rudi, now Esselgroth, light soprano, who can take an A♮ in alt, sounding as fine as the A in the octave below, and for whom the F in alt seems like an ordinary note; and Dorothy Canberra, my Australian pupil, who sings the Queen in *The Magic Flute* in the original key. A few more can be quoted, but not many; these very high ranges are rare. Gerster, Patti, Nilsson, Tetrazzini, Melba, and Eames could never boast of the highest notes in alt, nor did they attempt the parts that required them.

(2) *Soprano leggiero* (light soprano) is seemingly of the same quality as the *soprano sfogato*, but does not attempt to sing above E♭ or E♮:



Parts: Lucia, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Sonnambula, Ophelia, etc.

(3) *Soprano leggiero lirico* (mixed category). These voices can sing in a few of the last-named operas, but are strong enough to add Marguerite in *Faust*, Juliet, Mimi, Micaela, etc. They need not sing higher than C♯:

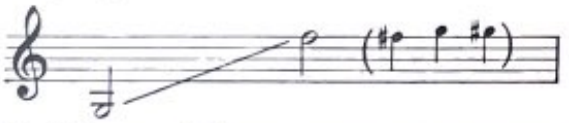
(4) *Soprano lirico*. Parts: Elsa, Desdemona, Butterfly, Sieglinde, Elizabeth, etc. Perhaps Leonora in *Trovatore*.

The range need not surpass C♯. (This voice is already of a stronger quality.)

(5) *Soprano giusto* (dramatic soprano). Parts: Fidelio, Brünnhilde, Norma, Aïda, Tosca, Santuzza in *Cavalleria*, Amelia in *Ballo in Maschera*, Leonora in *Trovatore*, Isolde, etc. Need only possess a powerful C, but has a stronger medium and full chest notes.

(6) *Soubrette* (smallest soprano voice). Parts: Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, Marcellina in *Fidelio*, Musetta in *Bohème*, pages' parts, etc. May have the lightest soprano quality, but must be able to touch the high C.

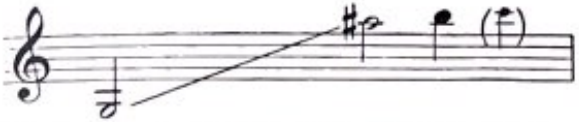
(7) *Contralto* (lowest). Among contraltos we count four categories: the lowest, so-called oratorio contralto: *Messiah*, *Elijah*, Orfeo (Gluck), Erda in Wagner's *Ring*, Orsini in *Lucrezia Borgia*, etc. Must sing easily the lowest G and need not go higher than the last F in medium:



(8) *Contralto, so-called mezzo-soprano.* This is a contralto

of lighter colour, still rather heavy, but of larger range. Parts: Azucena in *Trovatore*, Delilah, Queen in *Hamlet* (Ambroise Thomas), in some cases Ortrud in *Lohengrin* (which is also sometimes sung by dramatic soprano when a mezzo-soprano is not at hand), Fricka in the *Ring*, Nancy in *Martha*, etc. Must possess a full low and middle register and be able to touch the B♭ in head voice. All my operatic contraltos and mezzos sing with the greatest ease up to B♭, even to C.

(9) *Operatic contralto.* Parts: Fides in Meyerbeer's *Prophet*, Delilah, Amneris in *Aïda*, Charlotte in Massenet's *Werther*, Carmen, Mignon. The last three parts can be sung by mezzo-sopranos, provided that their characters fit them. They must go to B♮ and, in *The Prophet*, touch the high C. Astra Desmond, my dramatic operatic contralto, takes high C easily.



Since Calvé chose to sing Carmen, the part has been sung by every category of voice, so long as the talent of the singer was equal to the talent of the actress or vice versa.

(10) *Lyric coloratura contralto.* This is another of the misunderstood voices. It is rare and has, in modern operas, very few suitable parts, unless the singer's dramatic talent enables her to take up Charlotte, Mignon, and Carmen as well. The true repertory consists of a few pages' parts and Siebel in *Faust*, when they do not happen to be transposed

and given to sopranos, as is done in England. This type of voice must possess power of execution, and flexibility is its main characteristic.

Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* was written by Rossini for light low voices which, in his other operas, *La Cenerentola, L'Italiana in Algieri*, etc., have a wide field for display. In Mozart's works there are wonderful dramatic agility arias going from low G to B♭ in head voice. See Titus, etc.

Unfortunately technique is no longer developed in all voices as in former times, when, quite rightly, the voice was considered as an instrument and asked to perform like an instrument. Nowadays it is only in cases of a completely natural disposition to flexibility that teachers think of developing it. Consequently the works of a master like Rossini are dropped, and if they had not been revived in the Italian Rossini Opera Season given in Paris in 1929, the public of our time would scarcely know that such things ever existed. Conchita Surpervia, the delightful Spanish coloratura contralto, was there to save the situation, and through her presentation of these beautiful old operas attention was drawn once more to the lost style represented by these works.

Still more unfortunate is the influence directors and conductors use in persuading low voices with an easy high range to take up dramatic soprano parts. Those who resisted, still sing, but the careers of those who gave way have come to an end. Phyllis Archibald, my operatic mezzo, was teased and almost martyred, being offered the finest engagements at La Scala and Chicago if she would take up soprano parts. Even Signor Polacco, the conductor,

advised her, but she wisely resisted, and kept her beautiful voice.

As a teacher I only came across two of those rare coloratura contraltos: one was a French girl who started a very fine career that was interrupted by an early marriage; and lately my school produced a singer belonging to this category in the person of Gladys Gay, an English girl, who created nothing less than a sensation in Paris drawing-rooms and concerts, and who will certainly make her mark in the musical world. She too had to defend herself more than once against ignorant people who would class her voice as a soprano.

All the knowledge accumulated by study will not take the place of inborn talent and instinct. Just as some people are colour-blind and will never distinguish green from blue, so others are tone-deaf and will never hear the difference between a mezzo and a dramatic soprano, etc.

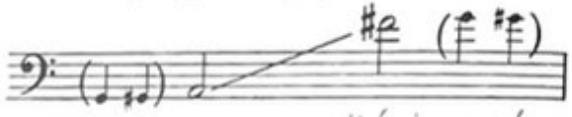
(1) Soprano acuto sfogato.
(2) Soprano leggiero (light).
(3) Soprano lirico leggiero (mixed category).
(4) Soprano lirico.
(5) Dramatic soprano (soprano giusto).
(6) Soubrette.
(7) Oratorio contralto.
(8) Mezzo-soprano.
(9) Operatic contralto.
(10) Lyric coloratura contralto.

GAMUT OF MALE VOICES

(1) First or lyric tenor.

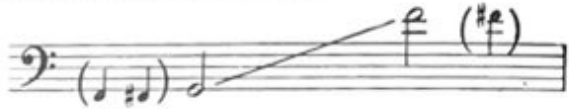
(2) Dramatic tenor (tenore serio).

(3) Baritone (heavy and light).



this is me!

(4) Basso cantante (first bass).



(5) Basso profondo, basso giusto (second bass).

(6) Contraltino (very exceptional), haute-contre.

(7) Contra-basso (very exceptional).

Can a voice be injured by working in the wrong *tessitura*?

Yes. If you place the voice in the wrong *tessitura*, even placing it according to all the rules.

A striking example of this is found in the singers of former times, who, as we may read in books, would sing parts written for voices other than their own. You will read in Garcia's biography that he used to sing his father's dramatic tenor parts on tour, when his father was prevented through illness from appearing—and Garcia II was a baritone. This practice very soon told on his voice and stopped his career as a singer early, to his small loss and to the great gain of the singing world, since he was a pure scientist in spirit, and was thus put on the track of the most important discoveries that resulted in the foundation of laryngology and also in the discovery of the true singing method.

His two great sisters, Malibran and Viardot, also sang parts belonging to different voice categories. Their repertories were a complete medley of contralto, dramatic soprano, and light soprano parts: Fides, Orpheus, Norma, Sonnambula, Desdemona, etc.

To-day we should not dream of allowing such dangerous practices. Malibran died at the age of twenty-eight, and thus the ruin that would inevitably have overtaken her could not be observed in her case. Madame Viardot, owing to her strenuous repertory, stopped her glorious career as a singer in her best years. in her early 40's!

What is *tessitura*?

It is the Italian word for range. Every voice can only work in the range given to it by nature. This does not mean that every singer presents himself to the teacher in possession of the range to which the quality of his voice entitles him. Provided that the teacher rightly recognizes the category of a voice, he will make it acquire the depth and height it is capable of, but may not possess at the moment, and he will never attempt to make it work in a range belonging to other voices.

Composers of the past used to study the voices and their capacities with the singing teachers or singers themselves,

and as at that time singers were almighty and composers and conductors depended entirely on their good will and good temper, the composers were well aware of the necessity to write every part intended for a certain category of voice within its proper range. They would not have dared to ask singers to undertake a task entirely beyond their powers. The music was subdued to the singers' capacities, and their voices were not ill-treated as they are to-day. When singers themselves chose, for one reason or another, to sing a repertory belonging to another class of voice, their ruin could at least be laid at nobody's door but their own.

I have especially observed some cases, most regrettable and painful to witness, of very fine contraltos who, having easily acquired a high range, passed into the ranks of dramatic sopranos, for the mere satisfaction of seeing their names heading posters and programmes, etiquette in art demanding that sopranos and tenors should come before contraltos and baritones. What does it matter what one sings? Success is all that counts. But such small-minded vanity is attended by disaster.

I have heard very often a few lines, well sung by a beautiful voice, carry all the honours of an opera. One night at Covent Garden, Selma Kurtz, my mother's pupil, beat the whole company, including Caruso, in the *Ballo in Maschera*, though she sang only the part of the Page; but it is true that she sang it brilliantly, taking the house by storm and receiving the greatest ovation of the evening.

Success lies always where art lies, and the mass of people that forms a public is carried away and influenced by nothing else but their own feelings, which scarcely ever fail to be right.

It is not only injurious to the voice for an artist to take up a part outside his range; parts are written in a certain spirit and to a certain conception, so that the æsthetic side

of the interpretation is bound to suffer from misrepresentation. Composers render heroic, comic, or sentimental characteristics through the medium of certain voice qualities, which somehow they heard mentally when writing. If the voice be low and made for the representation of certain literary types—leaning towards strong character, let us say—this same voice will throw the whole conception of a part out of its bearings if it is required to impersonate a light character. Everything will appear entirely out of focus. The effect will be that of a picture painted on a red background suddenly reproduced with a black background. It is as disastrous as transpositions.

The colour of a voice matched with a certain character will change this character entirely if it has not the required quality, light or shade, height or depth.

If you can imagine Delilah being sung by a light soprano or Mimi in *Bohème* by a contralto, you will be able to imagine the wrong that can be done to a singer who, incapable of changing the nature of her voice, makes her own success and that of the work she reproduces alike impossible.

10. VISIBLE MOTORS OF THE VOICE

Which are the principal motors producing the voice?

The heart is the first. It is the principal source of action. The lungs are the second.

If the heart is the motor of life, the lungs by procuring breath act as the driving power and by pumping the air keep the first motor going.

The third motor is the vocal instrument itself. Sound is formed by the glottis, the details of which are explained in another section.

The production of sound necessitates that all organs of the human body should exercise their normal functions, but the three mentioned above are the direct motors without

which nothing can be done, nor a sound be produced. It goes without saying that the nerve centre of the brain controls the movements executed all over the body. It is the power station of motion. Altogether, not one part of the human body can act unaided. The larynx is subject to the same law. It does not, as many people believe, stand alone in the throat, like a tree on a mountain. It is as complete and complicated as a watch. As there we see wheels within wheels, so here muscles and nerves react upon each other. Some connect the larynx directly and indirectly to the smaller and larger motors. Disconnected from any one of the motors, the voice fails to act.

Can we alter or interfere with any part of throat or chest belonging to the production of sound?

We not only can, but we must know our throat, and all that appertains to the production of sound, so thoroughly and intimately as to be able to influence, for better or worse, different parts of the vocal organs, and their subordinate parts.

Can the windpipe be altered at will?

The windpipe, if subject to illness or wrongly used, will produce a noisy breath. If it is healthy and left undisturbed whilst a deep diaphragmatic breath is taken, and every part of the throat relaxed, there will be no involuntary noise produced at all. But the wheezing and indeed all forms of audible breathing caused by ill-health can be artificially produced by deliberately squeezing the windpipe.

Can we alter and interfere with any other part of the throat?

Yes, several more.

The larynx, in its movements, obeys our will. We can change its positions quickly or slowly, and we can be right or wrong in doing so.

The vocal cords can be used both in the right and the wrong way. We shall be right in closing them firmly but gently, wrong in not closing them, thus letting the air

He makes little mention of the pharynx - perhaps including its actions as a result of correct breathing - "every part the throat relaxed!"

through, or closing them with a violent jerk, hitting one against the other, so to speak. This fault is disastrous.

The palate, that is, the soft back part of the palate which has the uvula for its centre, can at will be left alone or strongly contracted and let down like a sail on a boat, as vocal production may demand. This last process is called "covering." When the female voice uses the head register the soft palate lifts slightly.

As women possess a capacity for covering their chest tones also, so, like men, they can change the condition of the soft palate and contract the pharynx.

Tonsils, like every other part of the throat, can be left alone or altered. By lifting the root of the tongue and letting the soft palate sink, contracting the whole pharynx violently, we may draw the tonsils out of their position, making them approach each other and in some cases meet. This may be observed chiefly in men who do not know the use of their upper notes and try their best to reach them by squeezing their tonsils. This produces a bad, if not comic effect, and should never be allowed.

The pharynx, which is the whole box containing the vocal instrument and the back of the mouth, can also be left completely relaxed at will or used to perform certain functions necessary to singing, provided that the correct registers and sounding-boards are employed.

The back nostrils, through which the nose conveys the air received through the front nostrils, are of the highest importance, a fact that cannot be sufficiently emphasized. They play a serious part in the formation of beauty and power in the human voice. Like the other parts forming the whole vocal instrument mentioned, the back nostrils may be manipulated at will; they can be opened or closed.

When the singer suffers from an acute cold, the back nostrils are generally inflamed and swell to such a degree as to leave no space for the air to come and go. In some

cases even they are completely closed. The same effect is produced when chronic inflammation, adenoids, or any growth obstructs the passages, and the air finds its way with great difficulty, or not at all, until the hindrance is removed by cure or operation.

Perfectly healthy back nostrils it lies absolutely in our power to close or open. To use the detestable and impossible method of singing through the nose, which is an offence to any musical ear, is to leave the back nostrils wide open in emitting sound. No greater mistake could be made. Men and women equally must keep the back nostrils closed when singing. The inside of the nose may be compared to a dead lump of cotton, and the way to it must be barred while tone is produced.

Tone cannot be used without a sounding-board and, I cannot repeat it often enough, must find it in whatever register happens to be in use. The back nostrils, therefore, can only yield when the pronunciation of certain consonants like *m* or *n* imperatively compel the singer to open the nasal passage for an instant. The consonant having been pronounced, the back nostrils must be immediately contracted again.

These seven parts of our vocal instrument we can and must specially control.

Whilst singing, no muscles of the throat must be made to work except those actually required. All must begin by being completely slack, so that as the notes are taken the required parts may contract and again relax whilst others in turn contract. But, needless to say that, when running through the whole scale, the instrument will never be entirely relaxed.

Singers should always avoid crying or laughing violently. The air passages change shape, the blood-vessels of the larynx are flooded, and congestion is created. One of the great endeavours of a singer must be to avoid congestion.

1. Windpipe
2. larynx
3. vocal cords
4. palate (soft)
5. tonsils
6. pharynx
7. back nostrils

II. INVISIBLE MOTORS

There is, beside the voice, which is a complete physical instrument, something else that makes us sing. Here, too, predestination comes first, as in everything else that rules our lives. Every one of us, although he thinks that he walks, is pushed along a road chosen for him, which he had to follow and from which there is no escape.

If singing is your destiny, the possession of a voice is generally, although not always, united to an invincible desire to sing. I have known several cases of persons endowed with phenomenal voices who avoided taking up singing professionally and buried their talent, hating art and work. But generally speaking, to have a voice is to be possessed by an ardent desire to produce it. The sensation is difficult to explain, but it will be understood by those who have felt it.

On the other hand there are people whose only wish is to make the world happy by their song, but who have neither voice nor talent.

If the former cases are sad, the latter are tragic. The first deprive the world of beauty, the second force completely undesirable performances on hearers. This latter type is also to be met with in other arts, where it no less distressingly exhibits nature's cruelty in bestowing feeling unaided by talent upon a person.

There is a purely physical sensation which urges the possessor of a real voice to use it. It amounts to an absolute physical craving to let the vocal instrument perform, much as when any other part of our body is endowed with muscular facility—hands for the playing of instruments or feet for dancing.

Our subconscious self, which advises us at any moment of our life, unaided by other powers, is the other motor which decides us to take up this or that career. The fish in the

water has to swim, the singing bird on the branches has to sing, the horse has to gallop, and none knows why. They are pushed by visible and invisible factors to act as they do.

As I have already said, wonderful gifts may be bestowed on individuals unfit to understand their value or to make use of them. Others, to whom gifts were refused, would give anything to possess them.

There is no career without sacrifice. Many a pupil I have had, richly endowed perhaps, and even willing to work to a certain point, who shrank back before the fatigue and worry involved in a career. I am sorry to say that I speak mostly of British pupils. Indifference, love of comfort, hatred of responsibility, and often inborn laziness will make them turn their backs on a bright future in art. Glory and money have often been pushed aside by gifted students because their acquisition meant hard work and perseverance.

Pupils of other countries are generally more ambitious than the British. The American pupil may be called the most ambitious of all, but Americans are often driven by impatience and hurry, wanting to do the most in the shortest time, which is apt to spoil their prospects for ever.

This same nation produces a special type of singer who studies insufficiently and yet wants to perform in opera. The most unfortunate effect of this is that, being unable to secure engagements through talent, these people resort to paving their way with gold, which they throw out with both hands, thus making for bad performances followed by glowing criticisms, and ruining the market for all the really well-equipped singers who cannot compete with their dollars.

I have met students and artists who were sparingly adorned with natural gifts in the way of visible motors, but whose invisible motors made them persevere relentlessly until they achieved perfection and, in consequence, success.

It comes again to the saying of Garcia II, that modest voices can triumph if character does support natural gifts.

A phenomenon of a purely physical nature is that which makes us feel that we are in "good voice" without having tried it. The same intuitive sensation is felt when we are in "bad voice." When we feel that all goes well with the body and the throat, we have at the same time an invincible wish to sing, and a conviction that the voice will be in perfect condition as soon as we begin to use it. This never fails to be found true.

With some persons surroundings, circumstances, and other moral conditions, such as being happy or unhappy, will have a great effect even on the quantity and quality of the voice. Others, perhaps less sensitive and of stronger physical build, will not feel their voices subdued by depressing outward circumstances, of which the brilliancy and reliability of their voices will be all but independent.

All animals, with few exceptions, can produce sound, and even some of the smallest, like the mosquitoes, can be heard. Large animals have a larynx similar to that of man, but the possibilities of producing sound are limited to what nature has given them. From their birth to their death, they will always utter certain sounds, and to each species is given the faculty of producing vocal noises, which can never be altered.

In the animal world birds alone sing, and they can even be taught to vary their sounds within limits.

To man alone is it given to use his voice in two ways. He is able, moreover, to vary its expressions at will. Speech and song are his two distinct gifts, but even into these he can put an infinite variety of sounds. Quantity, quality, and colour are at his command.

Quality is generally given by nature, but it can be improved, and even in some cases created, by practice. Quantity also can be increased by work and proper management. Colour will depend on the singer's soul, intellect, and heart.

Man can do more than produce mere sounds: he can express thoughts, feelings, and even convey pictures by means of his voice. He can let his whole soul become vocal. Therefore, the human voice must be declared to be the first and most complete instrument in the world.

The production of sound in man is invisible to the onlooker, who, if he did not see the movements of the mouth, might be induced to think that the sound was coming from another world.

Animals' voices also are invisible, as far as the work of the vocal instrument is concerned, but the larger animals, in producing sound, often make the most exaggerated contortions. You will say that some artists too make grimaces, often the most ugly ones; but then, they choose to do so, for it is not necessary, and can be avoided. Whatever art is presented, if it be really great, appears effortless and always æsthetically satisfying.

Although we know that there is a vocal instrument, wonderfully constructed in all its details and visible by means of the laryngoscope, our eyes cannot detect its actual working. The invisibility with which nature has endowed it makes it unique amongst instruments, and is its first and principal charm. If we could see the larynx at work, all illusion would be gone. Singing seems to the hearer as if worked by magic, and it is well that it should be so.

The greater the artist, the less audiences realize that singing is the work of an instrument, that whilst wonderful sounds fill the air, a hidden machinery is in action.

More magical even than the production of sound, more invisible still, is the remembrance in our brain, which takes in and retains sounds and words once heard. We cannot see the part of our brain that receives the impression of words and sound, and endless though the possibilities of remembrance are, the receiver is concealed from us.

Remembrance of words, prose or verse, seems easy to

understand, but how the human brain can recollect thousands of melodies and individual qualities is indeed deeply mysterious. Perfume will fade, the memory of colour grow pale, and books we read will be forgotten; but sound will live and be recalled years later, sometimes when we least expect it. It was there all the time, waiting to be released.

Often, as time passes, memory grows stronger in us, and the voice we loved, provided we did love it truly, will never vanish from our memory. It will follow us to the end, until life is extinct. So, of all things that are given to us on this long pilgrimage here below, the invisible and unfathomable are the most faithful companions, and among them the remembrance of sound is the most imperishable of all, provided we are musical.

It remains in our soul: no power on earth can take it from us; it can be recalled millions of times and always be the same, anywhere and at any moment of our life—the most permanent of gramophone records.

These records, taken by our memory, can be played at will. There is, however, a great difference between the sounds of instruments made by man and the sounds coming from a human instrument that is both record and performance in one.

If you wish to remember a violin or a flute as mastered by one of the great players, you will remember his interpretation, the depth of his feeling, the poetry of his rendering, but you will not remember a special quality of sound, as you always will think of a special quality in a singer's voice.

The singer's instrument, the human voice, is the more precious because it can never be replaced by another. If an artist smashes a violin, he can take up any other and continue his performance, and so it is with all instruments. But an artist who destroys his larynx will be silenced for ever. It is part of himself, connected with his whole body

and his soul; it cannot be separated from the person and is therefore precious and unique.

When you remember the playing of an Ysaye or a Kreisler, you will think of his agility, his hold on the public, his charm, style, manner, and technique. But in thinking of Patti, Jean de Reszke, Fugère or any other great singer, and directing your memory towards their performances, you will hear the actual sound, quantity, and quality of their voices as clearly as though they were singing in front of you.

Instruments are made by the hand of man, and artists can only let their soul pass through this man-made material. Part of their performance will thus depend on matter not inherent in the artist's body. The voice alone is made by the Almighty, and by Him only. That is why the singer can communicate the secret message of the Deity far more intensely than the instrumentalists, since no extraneous material, no man-made object lies between him and his art.

To be sure, all artistic expressions of whatever kind which reach the highest spiritual realms are supernatural, but only the human voice can be in direct and absolute communion with the spiritual world and convey the most direct messages to others.

Brain and heart being in close connection with the production of the sound that leaves the body the instant the soul conceives the melody or thought it wishes to convey, there enters into the performance that mysterious power which penetrates the listener's own heart and brain as directly as it has been conceived. There are singers with voices that can only convey sounds, and whose souls are not performing. They are just instruments and produce music like instruments. Again, you have heard voices of small beauty and volume that moved you to tears and made your soul travel far away to heights of invisible beauties, and to depths of inscrutable pain.

The best artist, playing on an inferior instrument, cannot hope for success. The man-made material will not allow his soul to express itself. With man it is different. Some of the best artists I have heard in my life had poor voices, but as the voice is part of man himself, their souls mastered the bad material and could shine right through the inferior means given to them by niggardly nature. Behind these voices worked a brain and heart fit to convey great messages to the world. Those who have not had the good fortune to hear these apostles of song will hardly be able to understand what is here described.

Singers with fine, but by no means phenomenal voices, like Jean de Reszke, the greatest Romeo that ever lived, or Fugère, the marvellous French baritone, or Victor Maurel, possessor of an ordinary, somewhat dull baritone voice, but a wonderful artist, have proved that they could easily beat singers with splendid voices and no brains.

Throwing all vanity aside, it must be said here that when I started my career my great success achieved was due to my capacity for letting my soul express itself through the medium of my voice, which at the beginning was not at all remarkable, although critics praised it. It took years for the duckling to reveal itself as a swan. I know that I was able to transmit the pictures I saw in my mind to the public, and it happened often that the impression I created went so far as to make people faint. Not wishing to speak without quoting facts, I must point to an article by Robert Hitchens about the song, " The First Miracle," by Paladilhe, of which he said that I did not only sing the music, but that when I sang about the miracle of the Child Jesus, the miracle actually happened. I could add many other illustrations, but as I am reluctant to put myself too much to the fore, I will pass over the many memorable occasions when very musical and sensitive hearers followed my performances so closely that they seemed to become a part of myself.

To-day, when the wireless finds ways and means of transmitting not only sounds but pictures, it is easier to explain this yet undiscovered mysterious power that passes on feelings and visions from the brain of the artist to the minds of the listening crowd. Science, in time, will explain everything that we now call mystery. We certainly not only possess in our person a reproducing gramophone, but also a wireless set. One day, the man who does not believe in the supernatural and has no faith in spiritual things will receive a completely simple and natural explanation for the miracles wrought by faith, and he will smile at his disbelief when confronted with so clear a solution of all mysterious questions. If we only open our minds candidly and honestly, there will be no need to wait until we pass behind the veil before we see and understand.

II. RUIN AND DISEASE

CHAPTER II

RUIN AND DISEASE

I. RUIN AND DISEASE

WHEN I speak of a broken voice, it must not be imagined that the voice can be smashed like a hand-made article. You could break a larynx only by cutting or crushing it.

"Broken," in the sense I employ the term, means spoiled or ruined for work, and this is true of the speaking as well as the singing voice. Actors, in forcing their speaking voice and shouting, can spoil their organ exactly like singers who use wrong methods; only in their case the efforts alone and not the use of wrong registers bring disaster. When human beings speak naturally there is no fear of loss or deterioration of voice.

I will mention only the principal complaints which disturb the action of the human voice.

(1) Thickening of the vocal cords through disease or wrong training.

(2) Disturbances of the bronchial tubes and windpipe, only through disease.

(3) Poor physical condition of the pharynx.

(4) Nodules on the vocal cords, the consequence of straining or singing with a cold.

(5) Paresis, or paralysis of the muscles contributing to the formation of the sound, due either to bad methods or to illness.

(6) Bad condition of the tonsils—a purely physical matter.

(7) Obstruction of the nasal passages, which is independent of singing methods.

(8) Weak lungs and general inferior condition, as well as

bad formation of the roof of the mouth, or any other bones forming sounding-boards (see section on Sounding-Boards in Chapter I).

Some cases that confront the teacher derive from natural faults, others from wrong training. In both the use of the voice in speech as well as in song is imperilled. Profound knowledge and experience is requisite to recognize the cause of destruction in a voice. Therefore, when the teacher detects bodily ailments, he will often do well to send the pupil to a specialist for medical advice.

If the person is completely healthy and yet the voice seems seriously affected, it is well to consult an eminent laryngologist who has gained wide experience among vocalists. However, I must warn those interested in singing not to accept the laryngologist's advice concerning the use of the voice after his personal intervention by cure or operation. Medical specialists have rarely any idea of the practical use and training of a voice. A knowledge of anatomy does not include a knowledge of vocal science. A doctor will be able to cure a limb, but not to tell you what to do with it in various sports, gynmastics, or dancing. Therefore, should he, for instance, advise a singer, after an operation, to start with slow humming exercises, his advice must not be followed.

Do not be in a hurry to use your voice after a cold or an operation. Doctors generally allow patients to sing too soon, which pleases the eager pupil, as well as the teacher who fears to lose lessons, but should be avoided at all costs.

In teaching one has to deal with various characters, and as human memory is often of the shortest where grateful recognition is expected, it is best for the sake of pupil and teacher alike, in bad or doubtful cases, to start lessons only after having received a written statement from a competent throat specialist as to the condition of the student's voice.

A sure way to detect whether a pupil is fit to start working again is to try a few minutes' exercises with full voice. If there is any feeling at all in the throat afterwards, if the sound is not clear, or even the speaking voice seemingly affected, practice must be delayed. It may be taken as a general rule that there should be a delightful absence of any disagreeable sensation after singing. The functions of your body, such as digestion or breathing, are not felt at all when they are normal. So your voice should be as fresh and easy after singing as before, and even the speaking voice should be quite clear.

Often, when singing after a cold, the voice seems clear for a while but the speaking voice sounds husky. In such a case the consequences of the cold are not yet overcome, and singing may result in several months' hoarseness.

Hoarseness in general may come from many and different sources, but they cannot all be mentioned here, as it would take a small volume to enumerate them. But let it be said that it is the smoke that betrays a fire lurking somewhere, the cause of which must be investigated as soon as the smoke is perceived.

2. LE COUP DE GLOTTE

(*The hit of the glottis*)

This section is both an explanation and a defence.

Garcia II unfortunately used in all his books and methods the term "le coup de glotte," the real translation into English of which is "the hit of the glottis." He used these words to picture more vividly the close meeting of the vocal cords in emitting a sound; but to bring the idea of what he really meant and taught nearer to the average student's understanding, he should have devised a phrase like " the

meeting of the vocal cords." Had he thought that the expression "le coup de glotte" would be used by mischievous or ignorant people in a way contrary to his meaning, he would no doubt have used different words.

My mother, knowing only too well what the "coup de glotte" meant, used the same term in teaching throughout her whole life, not dreaming any more than Garcia that it might be wrongly interpreted.

I must emphasize that this Columbus of the larynx could not have discovered the secrets of the vocal mechanism without knowing that to hit vocal cords, which means to make them meet with an abrupt, hard clash, would spell their ruin. For two hundred and twenty years, Garcia II, my parents, and I have, in an uninterrupted line, cured, saved, and trained countless singers who came to pursue their studies, and it was one and the same method that achieved an unparalleled success.

Garcia taught for seventy-five years and lived to a hundred and two.

My mother taught for sixty-five years—women only—and lived to ninety-three.

My father taught for thirty-five years, and lived to eighty-five.

I have been teaching both men and women for forty-five years.

We all found that while every sort of wrong-doing spoils the voice, the hard hitting of the glottis produces the most direct detrimental effect on the vocal cords themselves. Swellings, nodules, paresis, and paralysis are the consequences of this practice.

We also found that in former times the worst cases came from Germany and Austria. Shouting with violent attack was often the characteristic practice then, especially when Wagner's music began to spread and the disciples of Wagner tried to improve the enunciation of the artists. The habit

of hacking out the vowels (German) *a, e, i, o, u* (*ah, a, e, o, oo*) was adopted, and unfortunately up to the present day German singers detach words beginning with vowels, thus stopping the flow of sound. The Germans, thinking that vowels sound clearer, force singers to hit hard. But it is not the attack on the vowels that makes them stand out.

The "coup de glotte," with all its dangerous consequences, has been studied by throat specialists and singers, who instead of going back to the sources of the only true knowledge of the matter, Garcia and Marchesi, went dabbling by themselves in ignorance, and thus became the founders of a new religion, as will be seen in one of the following sections.

3. NODULES

What is a nodule?

A nodule is a thickening of the vocal cords in one spot, due to inflammation.

How is it produced?

Only by violent efforts. It may happen through singing, declaiming, or shrieking in anger or fright.

When visiting mad-houses, you will find in the wards occupied by noisy lunatics that each patient is completely hoarse. Speaking regularly with deaf people, shouting orders from afar, trying to keep up a conversation in a tunnel, even trying to speak through the noise of a big party, all these efforts strain the voice considerably and must be avoided by people who have to use their voices professionally.

How does a nodule look?

The nodule is red, and lies on the cord, protruding like a pin's head. One may have several in succession or at the same time.

Healthy vocal cords look white, but they appear pink,

red, or swollen if a cold or wrong voice-production has injured them. Chronic swellings are bad enough, but the worst condition prevails when one or more nodules have formed and singing, declaiming, or even talking has not been stopped. They show in different places of the cords, but always on the inner border.

That little knob is called " the singer's knot " in German, and in other language a " nodule."

Any affections of the throat produce huskiness, and it is only the laryngoscope that can detect and decide the origin of hoarseness. Complete hoarseness may be the result of two different evils. If nothing can be seen in the larynx and the lungs and bronchial tubes are free, the evil comes from another source, most likely from heart trouble.

Nodules can be discovered at once by doctors, and when treated without delay, they completely disappear.

Should absolute rest and medical treatment be evaded, a chronic condition will follow, which is far more difficult to cure than a case taken in time. Incurable cases have been known, but they were always due to the patient's refusal to follow medical advice.

It must be absolutely understood that if it is desired to effect a permanent cure of nodules that were the result of a wrong method, that method must be dropped after medical treatment and our method adopted. If the old method is resumed after a cure, the complaint will inevitably repeat itself.

I am against the operation of nipping off nodules, because every surgical interference with a vocal cord causes a scar. When this scar is healed, the affected spot of the cord remains stiff, and stops the regular vibration of the muscles, responding only to *fortissimo* effects, and refusing to render intermediate shades or *pianissimo*.

I will not mention the hundreds of cases which have passed through our hands, but I will quote only three of

celebrated singers who went through this ordeal—cases known to the public and reported in the newspapers.

Caruso, possessor of an almost unrivalled lyric tenor voice, was led by his great temperament to sing dramatic parts, thus putting too great a strain on his voice. He emphasized tragic high passages in his parts with too much vocal force, singing for a time in as many as five performances a week at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. A nodule broke out on one of his vocal cords, and he wisely took a whole year's rest after having been operated on by the process of nipping. When he resumed his career, he went on singing in the old way. After a certain time, a second nodule made its appearance. If I remember well, the doctors operated on him a second time. This should not have been done, for from that moment Caruso's singing was no longer the same. He could only sing with full force, incapable of producing his once very beautiful *pianissimo*.

Van Rooy, the splendid bass and an unforgettable Hans Sachs in the *Mastersingers*, had to interrupt his brilliant career when he got into trouble with nodules. He tried to sing again after an operation, but disappeared from the stage shortly afterwards, and was never heard of again.

Melba's nodule came partly from another source. It is absolutely impossible for those who follow our method closely to develop a nodule through singing alone, so long as all the rules are kept. But the best method cannot prevent a nodule from appearing when the artist sings with a cold. This is to attract the congestion of the mucous membranes in the nose directly to the vocal cords.

I have had pupils who were told by former teachers that it did not matter at all, that it was in fact beneficial, to sing in that condition.

Wherever a function is performed in your body, blood is attracted to the part that performs it. When you sing,

the blood rushes to your throat. If this organ is already congested and the vocal cords are set to work, you may for a while sing without experiencing anything abnormal, but at a given fatal moment the blood will fill the vocal cords, where it not only produces inflammation and swelling, but may also form a nodule.

Melba was singing her usual repertory with the greatest success at the Metropolitan Opera House, when some false colleague persuaded her to take up heavier parts, especially that of Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, since Wagner was the fashion.

She tried that part one night, and had she been well, she might have persuaded herself that it was not suitable to her voice, or to herself, and that would have been all. But unfortunately she had contracted a very severe cold in a performance of the *Barber of Seville*, and the effort to overcome the difficulties of the Wagnerian part proved an unusual strain. That night she developed her first and only nodule and at the same time experienced her only failure in opera. Horrified, she took the first available boat to England and put herself straight into the hands of my dear old friend Sir Felix Semon, who cured her without operation. In his consulting-room there was Melba's photograph, bearing an inscription expressing her profound gratitude to the man who had saved her voice. After having regained the use of her voice, she never again attempted a highly dramatic part, and singing her old repertory in her own delightful way, she was no more troubled with nodules.

I remember that the first experience I had of a nodule was of one contracted by my mother when I was a child. Although she had a most severe cold, her duties forced her to attend the rehearsals of her pupils' operatic performances at the Vienna Conservatoire. To be able to judge the singing, enunciation, and acting, she went to the far end of the hall, calling out at the top of her voice what corrections

she wanted them to make. Having kept this up for several hours, and continually forced her voice, she suddenly became speechless. When after some days of anxious expectation her voice did not return, she sent for Dr. Schwartz, who found a nodule on her left vocal cord. He would not operate, but treated it by cauterization with tannin powder.

In such a case complete silence is the best cure, but how could my mother remain silent, being forced to teach without a day's respite? Her hoarseness became chronic, and it was only after several years that she regained a clear speaking voice. As to singing, she could from that time on use only her lower octave. She never appeared in public again.

The memory of my mother's vocal accident impressed itself on me so much that it saved my own voice in a similar accident that befell me several years later. It was early in my life, before I had started on a career, or even pursued studies, as my larynx was considered by Dr. Fauvel too undeveloped to begin any serious training.

I developed my first and last nodule in consequence of a very severe cold. A friend of mine came to see me, a volume of Schubert *Lieder* under her arm, and greeted me with the words: "And now we are going to have a Schubert orgy." I explained to her that my cold would not allow me to try even one single song, but dragging me to the piano and opening the book, she started to play. I sat down, resolved not to open my mouth; but carried away by those beautiful songs, which filled my childhood and later life with joy and adoration, I could not help just humming a few of them. Before long I forgot myself completely. Indeed, it sounded better the more I sang.

Here I must mention a phenomenon which should be well remembered. Very often a voice that sounds thickly veiled at first clears up as if by magic after a while, becoming

easy and beautiful. Carried away by the happiness of having overcome the difficulty of production, you begin to sing louder and louder, forgetting every precaution, until suddenly the instrument, assailed by a violent congestion, gives way.

This is what happened to me. In the middle of a song, the sound stopped and I remained incapable of uttering even a spoken word. Deeply shocked, I retired, hoping to be better the next day, but as my condition remained the same, I went, much alarmed, to Professor Stoerk, then one of the great authorities in Vienna, who found, as I had feared, a nodule on my left vocal cord. He treated me in the same way as my mother had been treated, and I shall ever be grateful to him for not operating on this nodule. He ordered absolute silence, and as in my inmost heart I felt I was going to be a singer one day, I obeyed his orders strictly. After a few weeks I was completely cured.

One of the most inexplicable things of all the obscurities to be found in Lilli Lehmann's book, is the story of how more than once in her life she saved performances, when an intense hoarseness would hardly let her whisper, by practising for hours to regain the use of her voice. It is out of the question that she could thus overcome a vocal hoarseness which had its source in the larynx itself. The cases mentioned by her must have been bronchial troubles. I myself, who have suffered all my life with that complaint, have more than once been able to clear my bronchial tubes by singing—with moderation.

It is most dangerous to set down experiences in writing without giving full explanations and warnings, because very serious consequences might follow if ignorant students or even artists should try to follow such advice. I even consider singing during bronchial hoarseness as most trying for the voice, since it demands special efforts that should never be undertaken. But in a career involving

engagements on fixed dates, you naturally try to fulfil your promises, and not to disappoint agents and public. It is then a question of endeavouring to overcome the obstacles which put themselves between you and the fulfilment of such engagements. However, even the best will in the world must give way to necessity, and when the cold has invaded the larynx, a singer must not use his voice, lest he should lose it for ever.

Nipping off nodules with sharp instruments must be avoided if possible. I am told that this very year (1930), a new system of dealing with these singers' terrors has been started. The doctors seem to be able to pass waves of electric heat over the protruding nodules, which thus become absorbed, and so restore the cord to its normal condition. No instance of the success of this new system has yet come to my ears.

I have cured, and still cure nodules, and I have even dealt with cases my mother would refuse. I speak especially of fresh cases. Persons who have sung for a certain time while afflicted with nodules, which they can only do with the utmost difficulty, become chronic cases and often cannot be cured by singing alone. But fresh nodules can be done away with in the shortest time by certain stretching exercises which I have invented, after a complete rest and cauterization by a doctor and sometimes without the latter.

In some cases that I tried to cure the nodules disappeared after as few as twelve lessons. But I must repeat again that only obedience to my advice can secure successful results.

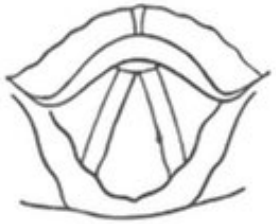
The same symptoms may arise from different sources. One day Dr. Fauvel showed me a most interesting case of complete hoarseness. The patient was a nun, with nothing in her throat that could reveal any illness. All the same, not a word could she utter. Dr. Fauvel explained to me that it was a case of hysterical hoarseness, and that he was

curing her by treatment of her nervous system. In a short time she regained the use of her voice completely.

A few examples of nodules I found in new-comers, and of some other inflammatory affections of the vocal instrument.

(1) Case of Miss O. H.

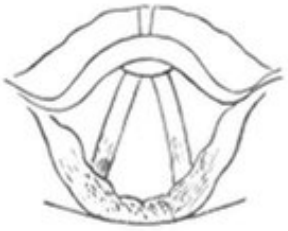
Remark.—Miss O. H., later Mrs. R., was seen by Sir Felix Semon after a first voice trial with me. A nodule was found on the left vocal cord. It was completely cured after practices with me, following a long rest. All huskiness disappeared, and the voice became a fine professional soprano. Unfortunately the gifted lady retired into private life after marriage. According to reports, she is still singing in society and for charities.



(2) Case of Miss M.

Remark.—After the first voice trial, I sent Miss M. at once to Dr. Wylie, having noticed that there was something abnormal in the closing of the glottis.

Dr. Wylie wrote to me as follows:



Case of Miss M.

" Miss M. has a slight laryngitis (the vocal cords are slightly red). I have advised her to give the larynx as little work as possible for a few days, to rest it, and I hope she will get all right. I have shaded the place on this diagram where the redness is, the part of the larynx which is used chiefly. Miss M. is not very robust, and must not tax her strength too much. Plenty of fresh air, etc., is wanted.

" Kind regards,

" Yours faithfully,

" (Signed) Andrew Wylie."

Remark.—After a short time of observation, I stopped the lessons of this lady, having formed the conviction that her general health was the cause of her laryngitis and that she never would be fit for any serious professional work.

(3) Case of Miss O. L.

Remark.—Having found at the first voice trial that there was an alarming huskiness showing in this voice, I had asked Miss L. to go to a throat specialist, or else I could not possibly start work with her. She followed my advice.

Letter from Dr. Tilley, 89 Harley Street, W., to Miss O. L.

" Dear Miss L.,

" In answer to your note received to-day, you might let Madame Blanche Marchesi know that you have a very small ' singer's nodule ' on one of your cords; beyond this, there is nothing wrong of any kind.

" Yours sincerely,

" (Signed) Herbert Tilley."

Letter from Miss O. L., London, November 8th, 1926.

" My dear Madame,

" I have what is to me really joyful news. Dr. Tilley says my nodule has entirely disappeared. He said had he not known where it was, he would not have known when examining I had had anything whatever. I enclose you the sketch he made for me on Thursday, as to the

Case of Miss O. L.

exact position of the nodule on the cords when I first went to him, and how it projected before he burnt it. I shall be with you on Monday.

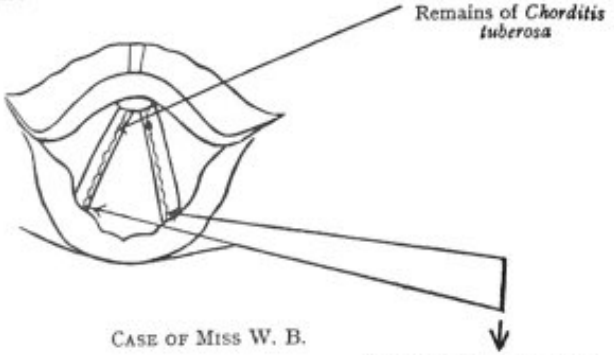
" Very sincerely yours,

" (Signed) O. L."

Remark.—This nodule disappeared after exactly twelve lessons.

(4) Case of Miss W. B.

Remark.—This lady was sent to me by Dr. Barty King, whom, like Dr. Tilley, I did not know. They were both complete strangers to me. He sent me this case himself, with the following diagram and explanatory notes, so as to tell me the exact condition in which he found her.



CASE OF MISS W. B.

Ten months later, Dr. Barty King wrote the following letter to me:

"13 QUEEN STREET, MAYFAIR, W.
"*July 22nd*, 1905.

" Since her last visit here, the most marked improvement has been in the clearing up of the pharyngeal condition. The action of the cords generally has much improved, and

during action, their edges are quite flush. Hence, on the whole, her condition could not possibly be more satisfactory, and her improvement has been most marked.

" Yours faithfully,

" (Signed) BARTY KING."

Remark.—A bad general condition makes quick progress more difficult than an acute vocal disturbance, and very often serious-looking cases get more rapidly cured than less dangerous ones.

(5) Case of Miss L.

Remark.—After a first voice trial, I sent Miss L. to Dr. Wylie, not wishing to teach her without her condition having been investigated.

Here is a letter from Dr. A. Wylie.

" 120 HARLEY STREET, W.
"*September 9th*, 1911.

" DEAR MADAME MARCHESI,

" I have to thank you for sending me a very charming patient this morning, but am very sorry to inform you that she has a nodule on the right vocal cord. She tells me that you diagnosed this. I think it was wonderfully clever of you: but there is no doubt there is a slight nodule present. Miss L. must not either speak or sing for some time.

CASE OF MISS L.

" I had given her a month in which to keep absolutely quiet, and she is coming again in October to see me. I believe if you obey these directions for the time I mention, we may do wonders for her, and she promised to remain silent as

far as possible. If I find that the little nodule has disappeared by October, I think she might then take lessons. She has the appearance and manner of one who will win great success.

If, however, the nodule is no better the next time I see her, I shall remove it with the galvanic cautery, but I thought it judicious at any rate to give the rest treatment a trial. I enclose a little drawing of the vocal cord; it is a most interesting case.

" Kindest regards,

" Yours very truly,

" (Signed) ANDREW WYLIE."

Remark.—This girl would not rest nor obey, and could never start singing.

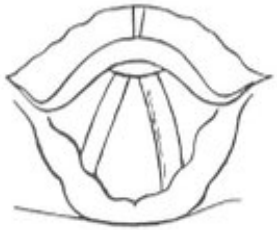
(6) Case of Miss L. C.

Remark.—After a first voice trial, I found L. C. had a nodule, and sent her to Dr. A. Wylie. Here is his letter:

" 120 HARLEY STREET, W.
" *February 22nd*, 1913.

" MY DEAR MADAME MARCHESI,

" I have seen Miss L. C. this morning, and have examined her throat carefully. You are perfectly right. On the left vocal cord there is a slight abrasion, of which I enclose a little drawing. It is not a real nodule, but I painted it with a little caustic, and have prescribed her an application, and hope she will be better in a week. I have told her not to speak nor sing until she sees you Monday morning. Rely on me, etc.



CASE OF MISS L. C.

" (Signed) A. WYLIE."

Second letter about Miss L. C.

" 120 HARLEY STREET, W.
" *September 23rd*, 1913.

" I was also very pleased to see Miss L. C. yesterday, and to find her so well. Her larynx is perfectly normal. I do not see any sign of a nodule now.

" Kind regards,

" Yours very truly,

" (Signed) ANDREW WYLIE.

" MADAME BLANCHE MARCHESI,
" 16 Greville Place, N.W."

(7) Case of Miss D. Th.

Remark.—After trying Miss D. Th.'s voice, I sent her at once to Dr. Wylie, convinced that he would find a nodule on her vocal cords.

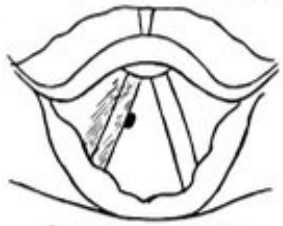
Letter of Dr. Wylie,

" 120 HARLEY STREET, W.
" *June 3rd*, 1913.

" MY DEAR MADAME BLANCHE MARCHESI,

" Very many thanks for kindly sending Miss D. Th. to see me. I am very sorry to inform you that she has a slight nodule on the right vocal cord. I drew a diagram of it, and presented it to her, and I also enclose one of the same for you.

" I wish Miss Th. to be absolutely quiet for two or three weeks, and I am sure you will agree to this, as it is absolutely necessary that she neither speak nor sing for at least a fortnight.



CASE OF MISS D. TH.

" Hoping you are well, etc.

" (Signed) A. WYLIE.

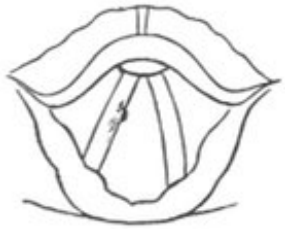
" MADAME BLANCHE MARCHESI,
" 16 Greville Place, N.W."

'8) Case of Miss D.

Remark.—Miss D. was sent to me by friends who said that she had had a splendid dramatic soprano voice, great success when singing, but that her voice had failed her totally of late. I found the case most serious at the voice trial, and detected instantaneously a nodule, sending her to Dr. Wylie the very same day. I thought that the case was hopeless because in cross-examining her I found that she had been singing for quite a long time, fighting hoarseness without ever trying to rest or consult a doctor. Here is Dr. Wylie's letter, written after the consultation:

"My dear Madame Marchesi,

"Your note to hand on Friday, re Miss D. She told me that you had detected a nodule. It is wonderful how you do so from the voice alone. I feel certain that with the vocal exercises you will give her the nodule will disappear, but I advised rest for a short time before you commenced your treatment. I think I shall have to send all my patients to you to be examined without the laryngoscope, as you seem to be able to diagnose their conditions so accurately. I have read with pleasure your letter re another case, and since you are interested in such cases, I am sending you a little picture of Miss D.'s nodule. You might file it among your interesting cases, etc.



Case of Miss D.

"Believe me, etc.

"(Signed) A. Wylie."

Remark.—This case was chronic and therefore incurable, though six years might have done it.

These letters and diagrams, taken from my notebook, will, I hope, help to demonstrate the danger of ignoring the right use of the vocal instrument.

4. TREMOLO

We must distinguish between vibration and tremolo. In singing, we detect three vibrations—as mentioned before: the vibration of the vocal cords by the pressure of air, the vibration of an inner sounding-board hit by a sound, and thirdly, the vibration of surrounding objects capable of vibrating.

These vibrations are natural and necessary, and they alone can form sound.

The so-called tremolo is the shaking of the muscles which perform the outer work of the larynx while we sing. It is merely the outcome of strenuous efforts when wrong registers are being used. The wrong positions involve the overstretching of the muscles, which, after having been strained for some time, relax and weaken, not being able any longer to hold the larynx in a steady position while the vocal cords send forth sounds. The whole vocal box, so to say, having lost support, the larynx swings helplessly, which causes a trembling, uncontrolled noise. This fault, if taken in time, can be cured. Placing the voice in the right way reduces it and in most cases makes it disappear.

General weakness setting in as a consequence of old age or illness may also produce this dreaded fault.

Singing too long at a stretch, even in the right method, or singing in the wrong *tessitura*, that is, not within the range of the voice, will also prove fatal.

The complete removal of a tremolo demands great patience. Simple exercises must be used and enunciation for a long time avoided, the working of the muscles of the tongue adding to the fatigue of the voice-work.

Tremolo may be caused by heart or lung trouble, or by a very defective diaphragm.

If you sing all your life in the right method and have no disease you can continue into your old age without tremolo. Santley, a comrade of my father in Garcia II's school, sang until his death, and I could name many others who did the same without showing this hated defect.

To give a clear picture of the tremolo brought about by destructive methods, I will use a simple example that will explain exactly what happens when the changing of registers is ignored. Take an elevator and think of it rising from the ground floor to the first floor. On both sides you see thick cords pulling the elevator up and down. Now suppose someone directs the elevator to the first floor, and someone else tries to keep it down by force on the ground floor. Pulling in two different directions will certainly ruin the elevator or at least will simply bring it to a standstill, because cords are not as elastic and patient as human muscles. Unfortunately, we can contrive to take wrong positions and to keep them up sometimes for years, and we can go up the scale without changing position, keeping the larynx on the ground floor, the "chest," instead of rising to the medium. We can do the same with the next register, the head voice. It is in the capacity to do the wrong things that the evil and the danger lies. The tension increases in ascending, and vice versa. Keeping to the former register, we make great demands on all the muscles, and this in the end makes itself felt and heard.

Tremolo is lighter or heavier according to the length of time that has been taken to do the destructive work.

I have cured small and big tremolos, but if a pupil has been singing for too long a time unconverted, a cure will become impossible.

5. THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW RELIGION

There was once a laryngologist in New York called Dr. Curtis. He became the friend and helper of the whole singing crowd in that city, and especially of the singers at the Metropolitan Opera House. The complaints among the singers were numerous, the vocal accidents serious. Dr. Curtis began to collect material, people like Van Rooy, Ternina, and hosts of other German singers, principals and choristers, showing signs of similar affections. In most cases the vocal cords were actually injured.

About the same time the voice of Edouard de Reszke began to fail, and Jean de Reszke, dissatisfied with his own voice, began to consult Dr. Curtis on both their cases. Jean de Reszke became a regular visitor at the private house of Dr. Curtis, and he would talk with his brother night after night, scrutinizing vocal methods and their consequences.

Edouard de Reszke's case was similar to that of Rokitansky, the bass of the Vienna Opera Company (mentioned in section on Nasal Method). After forcing the volume of his voice, he got into difficulties, being unable to reach his top notes as easily as before. He tried to save himself by singing through his nose.

"The Triumvirate" decided after many conferences that it is the hit of the glottis which endangers the singer's throat. No doubt they were right on this point, as we fully agree that to hit the glottis in singing must be the source of many vocal troubles. But they could not distinguish between the hitting and the closing of the glottis, and at once decided to condemn every method that allowed singers to make their vocal cords meet when emitting sounds.

Other singers were invited to be present at those discussions and some of our school, like Melba, Eames, Calvé, Susan Adams, and Sybil Sanderson, who had all been

trained in the Garcia-Marchesi Method, were shown the "bogey" of the "coup de glotte" and its terrifying consequences. At these meetings war was declared upon all followers of our method, and the artists' minds were worked upon passionately until they really believed that their way of using their voices was perilous.

It was decided that vocal cords must be prevented from closing suddenly. This was the turning-point that brought about an error cultivated ever since.

How could one sing without closing the vocal cords suddenly? Either by starting the note with an *h* (*ha*) which would make every fresh start sound husky, air being forced through the vocal cords whilst a note is attacked (first you would hear an *h*, then a sound), or else by starting a note with the aid of a preceding consonant.

All consonants were tried and, arriving at the letter *m*, they decided that this was fulfilling all their expectations. They thought they had here struck a gold vein in the dark labyrinth of their vocal ignorance.

The letter *m*, if you will try it by sounding a note at the same time, starts like the French *em*; then, passing straight through the nose, a nasal sound follows. But they thought that even an *e* (French) preceding the *m* might be dangerous, and so they decided to start singing notes on *m* with closed mouth, which makes the sound immediately pass through the nose and resemble the mooing of a cow. Obviously, their funny-bone did not trouble them. Neither did they object to unæsthetic noises.

Convinced that they had found a way to relieve the vocal cords of most of their work by avoiding the closing of the glottis in emitting sound, they decided to perform all exercises on the letter *m* with closed mouth and to try to sing otherwise through the nose as well. They thought that to send sound through the nose was to take a heavy weight from the vocal cords, whereas the exact contrary

is the truth. A sound sent to a bad sounding-board throws the whole weight of the work back upon the vocal organ and makes it attempt greater efforts to obtain volume.

This was the starting-point of this new religion, but it did not stop there.

It spread like a prairie fire, and all the ignoramuses, glad to find a new gospel at last, preached the pernicious discovery from the North Pole to the South. Dr. Curtis taught it to all his singing patients. He laid down in his book on the voice a curse against all those who teach the "coup de glotte."

This naturally meant Garcia and all his followers, including my mother and myself. But these were all idle words. The serious fact witnessed by the whole world was that Edouard de Reszke's voice failed completely when he was still a fine, strong man. His instrument was beautiful, but the nasal method destroyed it. His brother Jean de Reszke, one of the finest singers the world ever knew, fell a victim to the same practice in the prime of life.

The tenor's voice succumbs more slowly but no less surely to these exercises. And so the most fascinating tenor had to retire from the operatic stage. Although they were the first victims of their "discovery," they grew enthusiastic over their new thought and, wishing to save all singers, drew more and more fellow-artists into their circle, thus causing havoc in the singing profession.

One of the first to listen to them was my mother's pupil, Melba. Her voice was perfect, her *legato* of a rare quality, her *staccato* and trill perfection. They talked her over, explaining that attacking notes straight away, and especially *staccato* singing, would be her ruin.

And so, as my mother told me, Melba, returning one day from New York to work with her, as she did each year, suddenly started attacking all her notes with *ha* and avoided her lovely *staccato*. My mother immediately saw that she

had listened to new advice and showed her profound astonishment at the change. Melba owned timidly that the new religion had influenced her, explaining how dangerous some people considered the direct attack of notes. My mother, not knowing whether to be angry or to laugh, energetically countered the doubts suggested to her; in fact, she felt profoundly offended that, having given to the world such a perfectly trained voice, people should dare to dispute the method that had made that instrument so beautiful, especially after complete success had already been attained with this voice through her method. She was, however, able to dispel these doubts and to induce Melba to resume her former ways. After that, Melba remained faithful all her life to her teacher and her method, singing thus to a great age.

Students who are working successfully in our school have often had to listen to violent attacks on the method from which they benefit. It may happen that they are not sufficiently clever to understand the ugly motives that may inspire such mean proceedings and fall victims to their weakness. Some have actually disappeared, never to be heard of again, after abandoning the only way of salvation.

Jealousy sometimes takes such queer forms that it becomes difficult to detect it. When the danger is understood, it is generally too late. The same happens with singers leaving school and starting a career; everybody tries to influence them and it needs a firm character to remain untouched by the many idle words that spread dangerous advice.

I have seen many of my finished pupils, after years of perfect work and triumphant success, yielding to the poisonous insinuations of the Iagos who always lurk in the dark in the neighbourhood of professional singers.

When my mother began to reach a great age, Jean de Reszke started to teach. The nasal method spread, and

all those who claimed to have worked under him with the aim of becoming teachers themselves insisted on imparting that new gospel. Although his studio in Nice had become a veritable Mecca for singers, very few artists prominent on the world's stages can be traced back to his teaching.

6. NASAL METHODS

Who has not detected within the last twenty years a tendency to more or less pronounced nasal singing?

At first, when a few singers tried to send their notes right through the nasal channel, one thought that this was purely accidental, just the bad habit of a badly instructed singer. But alas, these isolated cases multiplied, and those who had the opportunity, as I had, of meeting singers in the artists' rooms, where we all wait our turn to be thrown to the lions, soon discovered that the defect was beginning to be cultivated. I found to my profound astonishment that the male singers, whilst nervously pacing up and down the room, were doing the most ludicrous exercises, producing noises belonging to a cattle farm rather than the green-room.

Too timid to inquire about these new proceedings, I had not long to wait for an explanation. This was a mania for a system—a new system that was being preached and taught. Nasal voice-production was not the joke it had seemed to be; it was spreading all over the world, and not a day passed without bringing me one of its wrecked victims.

The birth of this system has been explained in section 5, p. 91, "The Foundation of a new Religion."

The wrong done to the voice by the nasal system is not restricted to the male singer, for women also have been forced to adopt it, and I met especially ruined contralto voices which had been made to carry up the chest register high over the boundary line and, at the same time, to

direct all these notes through the nose. To force a register to the wrong place and at the same time give no sounding-board to the tone produced, is to destroy the voice, as I have already described in other sections. A great danger for every singer is the French language. If the pupil does not start by singing Italian words, or the teacher does not know how to fake the nasal French pronunciation, and insists on having every *n* pronounced in the purely French nasal way, the result will be most disagreeable. Many French singers, not knowing how to avoid this danger, have displayed a rather shrill and unæsthetic vocalization.

About that involuntary falling into nasal production, even when not singing in French, a grave fault that may happen to any singer who has not been trained thoroughly by our method, I can tell a tale. I was only a small child when, taking my daily walk with my father, who was then, with my mother, attached to the Imperial Conservatoire of Vienna, we met Rokitansky, the first bass at the Vienna Opera. The two men greeted each other.

"I heard you in the *Huguenots*," said my father.

Rokitansky, after a pause said hesitatingly: "How did you like it?"

"Very much," was the answer.

"Ah, that does not sound great; well, to tell you the truth, I did not feel up to much, I have lately been discontented with myself. I am worried about my high notes and hear that I sing flat, without being able, even with the greatest effort, to keep up to pitch."

A sharp north wind was cutting our faces, and my father said: "We are freezing here; come to me, and I will tell you exactly what has happened to you."

With an ironical smile, Rokitansky shrugged his shoulders. "And you really believe that you can do something to a voice?"

"Come to my house," said my father insistingly, "and

I will show you, explain to you, and," he added in a low voice, "save you."

Rokitansky drew up his head violently, answering abruptly: "That is all nonsense; I believe in nothing of the sort. What one is, one is, and one has or has not. Good night."

In the evening after dinner, my father related this meeting with the famous bass to my mother. He reminded my mother of having called her attention to the fact that Rokitansky's powers were rapidly diminishing through his trying to reach his top notes by letting them pass through the nose. "And that will be the end of him, if he does not stop it," said my father.

This conversation made a deep impression on me, and I have never forgotten it. It was the first time that I heard of a voice being lost through a nasal production, because at that time this fault was never cultivated by teaching. The bass had just drifted into it. A heavy-voiced singer, ignorant of method and without advice, who begins to find difficulties, hopes to avoid effort by allowing the sound to flow through his nose. But without the use of sounding-boards, singing creates fatigue and relaxation. The very fault which was to be avoided is thus called for. In the course of my life I have heard of several celebrated basses who came to the end of a glorious career in their best years through cultivating this dangerous fault. Rokitansky sang only a few years after the above conversation took place, my father's prediction being thus fulfilled.

Scaria, who took Rokitansky's place and was, if possible, vocally and physically a still more powerful bass than he, had a perfectly well-placed voice and never experienced any trouble. You would never hear a nasal tone uttered by this fine artist, who sang right to the very end of his career with a perfect voice.

I cannot refrain from telling an amusing story that circulated in Vienna concerning the strength of this bass. His

wife, according the law known to the philosophers, was very small and dainty. Her only defence in scenes of domestic trouble against this gigantic man was her tongue, and this she would set working in self-defence until, tired of words and burning for deeds, not meaning to hurt, but only to frighten her, he would lift her bodily with one outstretched arm from the floor and place her on one of those very high china stoves used in Austria, leaving her dangling and crying until she gave her solemn promise not to tease him any more. Giants are always kind.

In England there have been several very tragic cases of voice catastrophes due to nasal production. Gifted public performers head the list, and I am sorry to say that these losses to art were due to blind adherence to the disastrous nasal method started in New York. Still more tragic is the fact that, after having been ruined themselves, those who succumb to this training insist on imparting it to others, dragging them into the same abyss.

7. SOL-FA SIGHT-READING AND SINGING IN SCHOOLS: CHORAL SINGING

It is certainly preferable to start everything that should instruct and adorn a child's mind early in life rather than later. Reference is here made especially to sol-fa sight-reading and school singing. A child's larynx, if left entirely to itself and not forced up or down, used in accordance with its natural disposition, may, if nothing is exaggerated, be allowed to function and exercised in a general study of music. With girls this may as a rule be done up to the twelfth year. With boys it would be better to stop even before the twelfth year, if there are any signs of the commencement of mutation. Further details concerning this

important question will be found in the section entitled "Sex and Voice" (Chapter I).

In schools, as unfortunately anywhere else, there reigns complete ignorance of how nature's rules should be applied to art. I dare say, though, that in this respect choirmasters of boys' schools or churches can boast of more knowledge about their boys' voices than any other schoolmasters. Obviously, nature endows boys' voices with the capacity to bridge great difficulties. Fortunately, the abnormal alteration that takes place when a boy's voice commences to change into a man's gives unmistakable warning. It has happened, nevertheless, that even so wilful mistakes have been made and boys forced to sing through the period that should be one of rest. The penalties are heavy, for a boy's voice is utterly ruined for use later in life if that rest is not observed.

Unfortunately, the period of rest required by a girl's voice does not announce itself in such a decided way, and if at school a girl shows special gifts, she is made a sort of school star and is required to put herself forward on every possible occasion, in order to reflect credit upon the institution to which she belongs. Up to the age of twelve, sol-fa and sight-reading may be practised in moderation. But a thing that is absolutely detrimental to all voices, at any age, mature or immature, is choral practice. In a choir the voices work simultaneously and single cases cannot be picked out or watched. It may be that some larynx, for one reason or another, should not be set to work at all, others will tire sooner than the rest, and certainly no preferential treatment will be granted in English schools, which are all based on Spartan laws. The pupils will be made to sing with colds and, even more serious, febrile indispositions. That same Spartan law, which always reckons with the survival of the fittest and never considers the salvation of every one, is unfortunately also current in the high schools

when it comes to sport. How many a beautiful voice that came to my notice and into my hands has not been allowed to make itself heard by the world owing to some injury inflicted on it in childhood by senseless use and the subjection of the body to terrific strains in the playing-field! What, indeed, does a head mistress in a girls' school care whether a girl will sing when she is grown up or whether she will be a strong and healthy woman and mother? The pupil is just so much material used for the purpose of securing success to the institution. What does it matter if individuals are sacrificed?

This is to be seen only in England, and can happen even in England only because the British child is brought up to suppress its sufferings and is silenced when it dares to complain to its family. There is in consequence no help nor hope that so inhuman and dangerous a system will ever be changed so long as the rules of the nursery are maintained and the hardness and ignorance of parents fail to turn into a keener understanding of childhood.

To return to choral singing, it is altogether a dangerous practice for the human voice all the world over. One would think that any one producing a musical noise was fit to sing in a choir. Most voices come untrained to choral singing, or they join the choir after having ruined their voices by faulty studies. No longer heard in single production, they imagine that they are still able to use their voices, and sometimes earn their living in association with other voices. Doing so, they are left to drift by themselves, the only thing required of them being to sing in tune, to keep time, and to follow the fluctuations of *crescendo* and *diminuendo*. Therefore, if any one meets a child with special gifts pointing to a singer's future, let it be well watched and allowed to rest from the twelfth to the eighteenth year. In some cases, very few indeed, girls are ready to start earlier, but as a rule, both with boys and girls, the later limit is preferable.

There is nothing more tiring than reading music with the voice. No fatigue whatever is attached to reading music with an instrument, but the natural tendency of the voice is not primarily a musical one. It has its own functions, which may not be disturbed. Even a mature voice set to work in the right method may not be used to read or memorize music. A singer must begin by leaving the music to be performed at the piano, without uttering a single sound. When the ear and mind have absorbed and fairly well retained the music, then the voice may be employed and the melody imparted to the vocal instrument.

A grave warning must here be given. It has already been expressed in another chapter, but must be repeated here, for it cannot be mentioned often enough. It is a complete error to imagine that fatigue can be avoided by humming the music to be studied. The voice is not made for humming, and many persons have suffered loss of voice through humming. When the ear has not caught, and the mind not conceived the musical form that is presented to the eyes, the voice does not work with assurance. Following an uncertain conception of what is to be expressed, it hesitates in its movements and in the positions to be taken. No good result can be expected vocally, and it is only by repeating endlessly the same imperfect production that an understanding of the new music can be achieved. The way I proceed when a pupil does not know music or has a difficult ear is as follows: I touch a note on the piano, and teach the pupil to name the intervals I play. For example, I take the low C and make the pupil stand away out of sight of the keyboard. I first play the higher octave and ask the student to name that interval. The octave is easily established for the ear unless there is a special difficulty of hearing. After the octave I take the major third from the low C, the E, and ask what interval that is. After the major third, the minor third must be learned. This means

that the third note must be thought of as half a tone lower. Thus I proceed from half tones to whole tones, from major to minor thirds, various fourths, fifths, etc., without letting the pupil sing a single note. When I am sure that the pupil catches the intervals and understands them, I ask for the intervals I name to be sung, so that seconds, thirds, etc. are learnt by measuring the distances.

Meanwhile the work of placing the voice continues quite apart from this mental practice, and it is astonishing to find how soon the day comes when the pupils can easily read with full voice what is laid in front of them, their eyes measuring the intervals and their ear finding them. I have also adopted this system for some blind pupils and in such cases have achieved astonishing results. I teach them everything by measuring intervals, and their minds direct the movements of the vocal organ and measure by ear the intervals between the notes they are told to imagine, as others see them with their eyes. This makes for great assurance, especially where the ear is not particularly good. The exercises for correct pitch are similar to these.

III. OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS

CHAPTER III

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTORS

1. PITCH

WHAT is pitch?

To have the sense of pitch is to hear the note that one has to strike in absolutely perfect intonation, not too high, nor too low, and to reproduce it as one's ear and brain receive it.

Which instruments have to pitch their tones themselves like the human voice?

In wind instruments the player shares the responsibility of the pitch with his instrument. In string instruments the player has to create pitch entirely himself. In the piano the pitch is determined by the construction and tuning of the instrument and cannot be altered by the pianist. Therefore people with little feeling for the right pitch can play the piano as well as those with a perfect ear.

Can pitch be acquired by persons who do not seem to possess it, but who wish to sing?

Yes, when the reason for their singing out of tune does not lie in faulty hearing.

What other reasons beside faulty hearing can there be for singing out of tune?

There are several reasons that can induce singers to miss the pitch. If a larynx is not matured or fully grown and the voice not ready for service, true pitch cannot be expected. If the voice is in poor condition, muscles and vocal cords having been forced and misused, a singer possessing a most perfect sense of pitch can sing entirely out of tune without being able to correct the fault.

Whatever abnormal conditions may be found in a voice that sings out of tune, if they are of a nature to be healed or removed, the singer will regain pitch. The ills healed and the faults corrected, the ear regains full power of directing the pitch.

Weak heart, lungs, or diaphragm can disturb pitch seriously. If pathological conditions can be improved or removed, the fault will be removed.

What is it that makes man strike the right pitch?

One of those inscrutable miracles that direct the mechanism of our body.

Here is one of these wonders at work: we think a note, and at the same instant the brain and ear nerves, working together, seize upon it. The next thousandth of a second our vocal cords reproduce that very note which our brain caught and our ear pitched.

When this process does not take place, or only partially or more slowly, the person sings out of tune and it is said that he has no ear. The flash-like connection between brain and larynx is not properly established; some nerves do not act in good order.

Can this be cured?

Bettered, yes; cured only if the faulty nerves can be detected and treated.

If the person concerned has never lived in musical surroundings and never had opportunity to hear much music, exercising the ear will sometimes bring very good results. But if a person who has lived in the midst of music and musicians and otherwise in normal conditions had even in childhood shown a bad ear, a complete cure will be slow and difficult, sometimes hopeless.

Can a person become a perfect singer in such a case?

A perfect singer in many senses, yes; but a person whose ear has to be trained with great pains is never so pleasant to listen to as one whose gifts are inborn.

My mother and I several times cured defective hearing, and I invented special mental exercises with which I teach the pupil to measure the distances between the notes, semitones and whole tones, minor and major thirds, etc. In measuring the distances alternately, the vocal cords must find the right tension to hit the required notes. Thus pitch is assured, although the tone may be more or less pleasant. It is long and painful work, but the result often justifies the effort.

One curious case came to my notice lately. The possessor of a splendid voice sang in perfect tune as long as she did not use her full powers. Immediately the composition rose to a climax and the melody became thrilling, the sound of her voice would so fill her own ears that she lost complete control of pitch and sang terribly sharp. She became my pupil, and we both worked hard. Later this singer's hearing became even more difficult, which seems to prove that her nerves were not normal.

Another case, even more striking from a pathological point of view, was the following:

A beautiful, fair girl, a member of the great painter Gainsborough's family, came to consult me some years ago. Her case was unique. She sang, with a fine soprano voice, middle D with perfect ease; but from that note on, where the power of a woman's voice increases considerably, she would have her ears filled with such a roaring noise that her hearing became entirely blurred and she would have to stop. The noise in her head was so terrific that it almost made her faint, and if she could do as much as reach the end of the song, she felt nearer shedding tears than smiling when people applauded. After much thinking, I concluded that the fault was the consequence of an accident to the third sounding-board, connected with some bruise or injury to the bones lining the ear, or both ears.

" You have had a fall on your head," I said to her.

"How do you know?" she answered.

"You have bruised some bones severely, behind your ear."

"Yes," she replied; "I fell from horseback on my head."

"Then," said I, "it is through the injury to some bone that your notes, when you hit the upper sounding-boards, set the splintered bone into vibration. This vibration produces that roaring noise, and I am sorry to say that there is nothing to be done, as I suppose you are not going to have your head opened for the love of song."

Sir Felix Semon, to whom I wrote concerning this unique case, thought that there were possibilities of my diagnosis being correct. He also confirmed that he had never met with a similar case.

2. RHYTHM

Rhythm is the soul of music.

Has pitch anything to do with rhythm?

No, a person can sing in perfect tune and have, or not have, rhythm.

There are two sorts of people who lack rhythm.

The first has never studied music and has sung for pleasure in a neglectful, shapeless way.

The second has no rhythmic sense at all, and will never be able to acquire it.

Both will get into difficulties when it comes to the serious rendering of written music, but the first will be able to overcome the fault by assiduous work.

The cause of a complete lack of rhythm lies in the nervous system. As mentioned before, bad pitch comes from the faulty connection between the sound-receiving nerves of the brain and the tone-pitching nerves of the larynx. The lack of rhythm derives from weak nerves of the brain, which are

debarred from acting normally owing to a general disturbance of the nervous system.

Can lack of rhythm be cured?

The first form mentioned, surely and permanently. The second one less completely, or not at all.

What is the cure for so-called "bad time"?

Serious study and regular practice under a strict time-keeping teacher.

To cure yourself alone is not possible, especially at the beginning, because you run constantly into errors from which you are unable to extricate yourself, as you cannot judge your own faults.

My father always loved music, but as a youth only sang for his own pleasure and without guidance. But later, having joined the secret forces of Garibaldi and getting into political trouble, he had to flee to America. This voyage, by the way, was made in a sailing-boat that took six weeks to get there. On his arrival, with no belongings except a yellow nankeen suit and a thimble in his pocket, he had to start earning a living. He began by teaching his language, and later some influential musical people, having heard him sing, strongly advised him to take up that art as a profession. He was helped to reach Garcia in London, who had then, by his own desire, left his father's opera company and was making a world-wide reputation as a teacher.

It was there that my parents met. My father's weak point was time, and he would have almost despaired of conquering it, had not my mother, who was then a fellow-student of his, at the request of their common teacher, Garcia, taken my father's practice in hand and helped him to conquer this fault. And conquer it he did. Liszt used to say to Cosima Wagner, who repeated it to me, that Salvatore Marchesi in Bach and Handel had never had his equal.

Patti, they say, was a bad "time-keeper," and it took her years to learn one part. When Wagner began to come into fashion, Patti set herself seriously to the task of working at "Träume," a song beginning with a whole page of pianoforte solo. The singer who is not musical enough to follow the melody has to count the bars that precede the vocal entry. Patti, wishing to sing the song at the Albert Hall, but feeling rather unsafe about her start, arranged with one of her protégées, Miss Eissler, to play her accompaniment on the harp, and I saw with my own eyes that Patti stood quite close to the harpist and received a friendly nudge of the elbow at the psychological moment.

Phyllis Archibald, my operatic contralto pupil, shed more than one tear when working with me because she could not keep time. When I questioned her how it was that her former teacher at the Royal Academy had neglected to correct this fault, she told me: "Oh, when I got lost again and again, he said, 'Do not worry, child; don't stop—go on, I 'll follow you.'" Now surely this is not the way to victory.

I know that it is often disheartening for the teacher to be relentless in trying to correct faults; but who says "teaching" says "knowledge and patience."

In opera, one must know very exactly what one is doing and may leave nothing to chance. You not only depend on yourself, but partners, chorus, and orchestra are often likely to cause confusion in your mind if you are not "time-firm." But, however strenuously you count your bars, you must never beat the time with hand, foot, or head.

I have myself been present at two terrible ordeals at the Grand Opera in Paris, both occurring at actual performances. I saw under the direction of Taffanel, the Rigoletto quartet stopped and started anew. The singers were getting into trouble through one of them not keeping time, and I felt absolutely faint, for such an event seems worse than

an adventure endangering life and limb to a hearer who knows.

Much worse even was the performance of the *Valkyrie* at the same opera house, with Paul Viardot, son of the great Pauline, as conductor. In the first act, Sieglinde got out of control, and Viardot had to stop the orchestra. After a deadly silence in which the audience dared not breathe, he had to restart the scene. Such an incident is so terrifying that it can never be forgotten: dying in front of a cannon seems a joke compared with it. That night Paul Viardot could not continue his conducting, being too ill, and Monsieur Mangin, accompanist of my mother's opera class, a person for whom music had no secrets, took his place without ever having rehearsed the opera, and carried it through without a hitch.

3. PRONUNCIATION

It is undeniable that women do not articulate as well as men. Their vocal mechanism being far more complicated, more difficulties have to be overcome. Men do not have to sing using three registers; their voices involve only one change. The covering of their high notes, which means a change, presents only a slight difficulty, which is to avoid opening the sound on open vowels above E♭ or E. *Ah* cannot be used as a clear, open vowel on the covered notes, the soft palate being pushed down, and the pharynx contracted in the act of covering. With time and practice, however, a man will be able to sing any *ah* on his top notes, in keeping firmly to his covering, without a change being audible, as mentioned in the section, "The Registers."

Woman, alas, has quite a different problem to face with pronunciation. It is only in the first, the chest register, that, like man, she can pronounce clear vowels fearlessly. Here

again, one difficulty must be overcome and studied. If women are made to pronounce too many dark vowels, like Italian *i*, *e*, *o*, *u*, in the first, chest register, they will have to try to do so by opening their chest notes so as to make them carry far into space, for a woman's covered chest notes are muffled and also exercise a tiring pressure on the larynx if used too often.

Passing into the second, medium register of the voice, a great difficulty in emitting vowel sounds presents itself again in another form. The chest notes of the woman's voice find their sounding-board in the chest and collar bones. Rising into the medium register, a whole octave of the woman's voice from the first F in medium to the second F in medium has to be thrown forward towards its sounding-board, which then is the hard palate, lying close behind the front teeth. This can only be done by avoiding the true value of vowels like *ah*, *ä*, *ae*, *ai* (Latin).

The higher a woman runs up the scale towards F, the more she must darken the light vowels, or else the notes will not find bone as a sounding-board and will fall back on to the soft palate, where no bone helps the resonance. The voice will then sound what we call white, shallow and weak. Here again the carrying-power of the sound emitted in a large space will be impoverished. In consequence, when getting half-way from middle B to F, no open vowel may be attempted by women, except for quite special colour effects. Arrived at F♯, the change is sudden and complete. From this note on, women may not pronounce any vowel except the clearest open thrown-back *ah*, whatever vowel may be met with in the words of the song. Strange to to say, this is never detected.

In the medium register the vowel sounds must be faked, and although thrown to the hard front palate, they will sound as clear as if they were given their accurate value.

In the high notes it is the dark vowels which must be faked. A dark vowel destroys the head tone and forces the larynx into the second position.

Once again, women have to face the difficult task of constantly watching the placing of their words so as not to make them interfere with a perfect and even production of sound. Three times they are obliged to vary the placing of their vowels, whereas men have to change but once and to fake the value of their vowels only after that one change. This all sounds very complicated, and to the ignorant almost incomprehensible, but it only requires patient practice to overcome this difficulty very soon. Habit will make it second nature. The Italian language, albeit very favourable to the voice, nevertheless presents, like all the others, certain difficulties. In all the languages of the world the clear vowel is met with in places where it may not be produced, and dark vowels where they have to be faked. As far back as I can remember, singers who neglected their enunciation were often criticized for their complete lack of articulation. But there was some excuse for this: they wanted to produce beautiful sounds, and they simply dropped words which interfered with that production. They did this instinctively, setting the voice before all else. It must also be said that up to the time of Wagner opera librettos were poor stuff. There are airs in old operas where one word or one sentence fills several pages of the score, the composer laying his stress on the music alone. Now that literature is associated with music and the value of the words and of poetry has been recognized and enhanced by composers, who avoid the repetition of even a single word, the importance of pronunciation is acknowledged and respected; but singers' possibilities are not always taken into consideration.

When Wagner looked out for artists who could interpret his works, he found at first that most were trained in the *bel canto* school, where style and voice predominated and words were shamefully neglected. As his poems were not

only important but also very difficult to understand, since he used and composed new words and new forms of speech, he laid great stress on the fact that every word of his librettos must be heard. Since his music alone was found hard to grasp on account of its great difficulties and innovations, it was the more important that the public who tried to follow the composition should at least be helped to understand the drama. A campaign was opened by Wagner and all his disciples to make singers acquire a clear articulation. But the instructors did not know where the secret of this lay. They did not understand that the whole power of speech and declamation in spoken as well as in sung drama lies in the consonants. The vowels certainly must be given their value, but it is the consonants that give dramatic power to the word. But this they did not know and used their whole endeavour to make singers pronounce exaggerated vowel values. Whoever has heard Wagnerian singers of that time, and I might quote Van Dyck especially, cannot fail to remember what colossal efforts were made to pronounce sharply, what immense mouths were opened, chins dropped and facial contortions made, the words being positively hacked out, much to the detriment of the beauty of the voice. Words beginning with vowels were considered lacking in power, and the singers were made to attack every such word with a hit of the glottis. By these means they hoped to achieve a clear enunciation, but the result of all their efforts was the contrary of what the laws of æsthetics require. In attacking every vowel at the beginning of a word with a hammering stroke, they disrupted that wonderful flow of phrase we consider as one of the finest attributes of great instruments, the *legato*. The *legato* is the beautiful sliding of one note into the next without either interruption or slur. In a perfectly executed *legato*, no scooping or hitting of the tone is to be observed. Whoever in singing roughly ill-treats the

instrument which by its perfection should make us forget that it is flesh and blood, sins against beauty and awakes nothing but despair in the listener. This method of hacking, introduced in Wagner's time, but not by Wagner himself, is gradually disappearing, and although in Germany and many other countries voices are often sacrificed to a wrong conception of enunciation, the worst roughnesses have somehow subsided, and the only fault still to be found is that singers try hard to pronounce vowels with their full speaking value on notes which become shrill or muffled by such mishandling of the fundamental vocal properties.

This old method has lately been replaced in Milan by another which might be regarded as its opposite, but nevertheless strikes the hearer as being just as pernicious. This school tries to make all the voices "white." Women are asked to use but one register from top to bottom of their range and thus to produce one single colour of the palest shade, throwing the voice back on to the soft palate and robbing the first two registers of their sounding-boards. It does not cultivate the faults of pronunciation of the Germans, nor hack out the vowels at the beginning of words, but it insists on giving full value to all vowels on the high notes, just where it may not be done. In this respect it comes near the German method.

The French language presents other dangers. French people, pupils and teachers alike, as a rule only know their own language. French is fraught with enormous difficulties and pitfalls, often seriously endangering perfect production by its open vowels and nasal sounds. Even after starting to teach, as should always be done, with classics in Italian translations or the Italian classics themselves, a very difficult special training starts directly the pupil is introduced to the French language, be he French or foreign. Of all languages French is the most difficult to sing.

First of all, French pronunciation differs from that of other Latin languages, the *n*'s and *m*'s in certain connections requiring nasal sounds. The *e*, the *ah*, and the *ai* have to be pronounced in such an open manner that if the voice is not at the same time directed to the hard palate, and this only up to F♯, the result will be the most dreadful hollow, open sound which goes nowhere and hits nothing. Here again faking is necessary.

A man, singing in chest voice throughout his range, can freely pronounce French until he comes to cover. So far it will sound perfect, but from the first covered note upward, no clear, open, or nasal sound may pass his lips. To give the illusion of a clean enunciation, he will have to fake—that is, to place his notes as the voice requires, but to manufacture the vowels so as to make it appear as if the right ones were pronounced. It is not the voice that must be sacrificed to the words; the words have to be so camouflaged that the vocal quality remains intact. Nobody ever notices that vowels are being falsified. In the thirty-eight years of my career, not once did the public or the critics discover that I treated vowels just as I wanted them to sound.

In the *Ring* Wagner constantly put the words, "Siegmund," "Siegfried," "Brünnhilde," into Brünnhilde's text. Never in my life did I pronounce these impossible vowels on my high notes. From F♯ on, I simply sang "Sagmund," "Sagfrad," and "Branhalde." My faking saved my voice and was perceived by nobody.

Another great secret of clear enunciation is to make it precede the vocal action. Before a note is sung, the consonant must be placed ready in the mouth, so that no scooping can occur, and the note must then closely follow upon the consonant so placed. If consonant and note are struck at precisely the same time, they will both be blurred.

Enunciation goes its own way; singing meanwhile goes

another. They must seemingly run together but actually be kept apart in performance. In singing, for example, "Come to me," the *c*, the *t*, and the *m* must be already formed by tongue and lips before the notes are attacked. For this reason, and in order to be able to conform to this most important rule, the student should first practise consonants in speech. He should find out what parts of the mouth are involved in the articulation of different consonants, so as not to let a single one be formed without having first put all the muscles into the proper position. He must observe the lip consonants, *b*, *p*, and *m*, the tongue consonants, *d*, *t*, and *r*, the soft palate consonants, *g*, *k*, and *gr*, which latter leads to mixed ones like *pr* (lip and tongue), *gl* (soft palate and point of tongue), *ml* (lip and point of tongue), etc. Having found out by what means and where these consonants are to be placed, he will be able, after a short time of practice, to produce them in the right way the moment his eyes meet the letters indicating the different formations. There will be no haphazard enunciation, no softness, and no dropping of important letters. In singing *piano* or *pianissimo*, the strength of the explosive consonants must be subdued, but never to the point of obliteration.

The more dramatic the sense of the words, the stronger must be the explosion of the consonants. In the greatest tragic situations this explosion must be doubled, if not trebled. How is an explosive consonant uttered?

By prolonging the time required by those parts of the mouth which produce the consonant to accomplish that function. The consonant must not only be more strongly attacked and kept quite a while without exploding, but the note may follow only after the explosion has taken place. The power of such enunciation is considerable. All the great dramatic artists have used it either wittingly or unconsciously, guided by the unfailing instinct of a dramatic

nature. To pronounce a consonant at the very same moment that the musical sound is uttered can only result in failure.

There are languages which sound comic, and again some that it is hardly possible for foreigners to learn. There are some Slavonic languages which have much in common with Welsh, and are very unsingable. They possess many words in which consonants follow each other without being interrupted by vowels; but sound can only be produced on vowels. Even the German *ch*, as in *ich*, presents a difficulty, being hard both to pronounce and to listen to. Far worse is the *ch* in *ach* or *achtung*, which has to be pronounced by the simultaneous pressure of the root of the tongue and of the sunken soft palate, and really resembles the noise made in spitting. Habit alone has made us forget its ugliness. The Dutch language and the Swiss dialects present immense difficulties of pronunciation, which it would take too long to describe. Russian, rather musical in parts, all the same carries some ugly sounds with it. The *bl* often takes on the sound which the British make when trying to pronounce a *br* without rolling the *r*, but forming the tongue into a sort of hollow basket which in both cases produces an absolutely impossible sound for singing, not far removed from the call of a calf. It is rare to find English sung beautifully, but it can be done by pronouncing it absolutely like Italian. There is nothing to prevent any one from doing so. During my long career in England, both in opera and in concerts, I have always pronounced English like Italian, and I was often told that I was the only singer who could be understood in the English opera companies. One consonant shared by English and Spanish is really ugly, but cannot be avoided. It is the *th*. In pronouncing it you have to pass your tongue between your front teeth, which is not nice to observe, nor charming to hear. In certain dramatic moments, the *th*, like the *w*,

must be given a backbone before anything of a tragic nature can be expressed in a forceful manner.

A word must be said about the British and their language. I have noticed that as time goes on English pronounce it less and less clearly, and I must add that, the more refined they are, the more they slur over their words. Nearly every Englishman makes some change in his native language by this habit of omission. If this goes on, there will soon be hardly any language left, and everything will be expressed by the first or last letters of words, the middle being entirely dropped and replaced by strange noises. The only British country where people seem to have preserved their language is Scotland. The Scots do not munch their *r*'s there, but roll them. They begin their words, continue them, and finish them. That guttural sound which takes the place of the *r* in speaking, must on no account be introduced into singing because it is not æsthetic. When used by people in excited speech, its effect is at once comic and melancholy for those who are not used to hearing it. Some Americans exaggerate the guttural *r* still more.

British pupils, unless they are specially blessed with a refined ear and a gift of imitation, have great difficulty in learning foreign languages. These can only be really well acquired in childhood, when the muscles of the mouth take an early habit of conforming to a variety of idioms. It is very hard indeed for adults who have never spoken anything but English to acquire foreign languages easily and in a short time. I am glad to be able to say that many of my British students have attained the highest perfection in pronouncing what their ear was unaccustomed to.

In another direction I had some curious experiences. There certainly is no uglier fault in the pronunciation of English than the cockney accent; but I declare that those of my students who showed a dangerous tendency towards cockneyese sang foreign languages far better than

their own. I will go further. In a few cases it was quite impossible for me to eradicate this most inelegant accent, and it is, of course, absolutely impossible for a British artist to present himself before the public and the critics with this shocking fault. To my great astonishment, many well-born and well-educated Australians who come over to Europe cannot deny having been brought up by cockney nurses; and it must be attributed to the difficulty of finding first-class servants in Australia that the children should hear and reproduce the accent which in England is considered the worst. But here, too, a good ear will help to cure the defect, though a few cases I found stubborn and incurable.

The French language, as I mentioned before, is certainly the most difficult to pronounce perfectly. In France, as anywhere else, there are more or less vulgar dialects which spoil the music of the language and take away its beauty and character. The most disagreeable is that of the southern regions, where French is pronounced in the same way as Italian, and in consequence sounds distorted. Ugly as French sounds are when ill-treated, they are most beautiful when spoken quite purely. The part of France where the most refined language is spoken even by the low-class people is Touraine. I am spellbound when at my little farm near Tours I hear workmen talking. Some of them speak such ideal French that it can only be compared to the speech of actors at the Théâtre Français. How do the British know where the best things in the world are? When you walk through the streets of Tours, you may imagine yourself walking down Regent Street, for every other person you meet is a British boy or girl student sent there to learn French.

The German popular accent of Austria is simply charming. Difficult to be described, it can only be called sympathetic and amusing. It resembles no other German idiom, and

the dialect was used equally by the emperor and the coachman or peasant. In Vienna the lowest and the highest classes speak Austrian German, and when somebody tries to speak the sophisticated language of Berlin, it makes every one smile.

Haughty and pretentious as "high" German sounds in everyday intimate conversation, the Austrian German touches your heart with its kindliness and charm. I, who in my childhood went to school in Vienna, and who naturally caught the local accent there, was often asked at the English Court, where they loved Austria and Austrians, to speak in that special local idiom, and the hearers delighted in it.

Reverting to the topic of enunciation in song, I must say that great difficulty is found in teaching students to sing in their own language. No human being can doubt for one second that he pronounces his language well and clearly. He has always spoken it and thus thinks that he certainly knows it. Yet too often he does not.

To return to the question of pronunciation in general, it is for the singer to defend his voice against the pitfalls of words. He may never sacrifice vocal beauty, and if anything must be sacrificed, let it be the words. The greatest triumph is to present a perfect performance of both words and music, and that can only be done by profound and absolute knowledge of everything concerned. To pronounce seemingly well and to unite at the same time clarity of the words to homogeneity of sound—that must be the singer's great aim.

IV. DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

CHAPTER IV

DIFFICULT CONDITIONS

I. OLD AGE

ALTHOUGH I have touched nearly every point that is of importance in detecting vocal ills and their cures, I wish to say one word about old age and the voice.

Old age generally means decay, but it does not necessarily produce it. There are people who die old when their physical and mental faculties have not yet been destroyed by age. There are young persons who bear all the signs of old age. I must say again, the voice follows the body closely, and if a voice is trained in our method and faithfully clings to it, it will be preserved as long as the body remains young.

About the teaching of old people a word has been said in the section entitled "Sex and Voice" in Chapter I. We have followed closely the direct influence on the voice of sexual conditions. The opportunity of studying a new case presented itself to me one day.

A very old lady came to me. She must have been about sixty-eight, and was indeed old. She told me a very pathetic story. Singing had been the greatest desire of her life, but that joy had been denied her. Love, marriage, children, grandchildren, and especially the husband, stood in the way of attaining her life's desire. Time had passed, the husband was gone. Would I hear her voice, and if possible, could I give her some lessons? She wished to have something to remember when all her aims in life had ceased. I tried her voice. It must have been a very

powerful, fine dramatic soprano. I could hear that the bronchial tubes were not free and that all the muscles were invaded by stiffness. No real progress could be expected. She begged me to show her at least how to practise, so that she might be able to sing a few limited songs for her own satisfaction.

The case interested me, as it was the first opportunity I had had of working with an old voice, and I gave her twelve lessons. I was very pleased to see that her muscles gave way, and I can also make the assertion that I was able to place her chest and medium registers and even to blend them. In the matter of volume there was only slight progress, but I was able to impart the right use of two registers and sounding-boards. As to the third, the highest position, the larynx refused to work. It was too late.

I must repeat here that before a human body has undergone the development of sex and after the manifestations of sexual life have ceased, no vocal progress of great importance can be expected. However, the old lady was made happy, and I had been able to enlarge my experience.

2. YOUTH

It is a mistake to try and harden youth indiscriminately —it calls for disaster. This wrong idea is mostly put into action in England. Hundreds of young lives have passed through my hands, and thus my vast experience gives me the authority to approach the subject. To advocate fresh air is all right, but to open the windows in the sick room can have fatal consequences. A thoughtful ventilation will do. How many of my pupils could not face a career! colds caught and not cured in their childhood accounting for it.

How many ailing girls confessed that at school they had been forced to bathe in cold water and swim in streams

when feeling ill! How many were forced by the head mistress of their school to play games and attend all sports even when completely collapsed! Where are the doctors to examine and decide in schools which girl is fit to be forced to play games, and which is not?

I had a pupil who told me that besides being caned—a thing never heard of in our countries—she used to have to play games until dropping faint, and that, after shaking her and passing a lemon violently over her face, she was pushed back to the field. It took me years to restore her health. And she is only one of many. This was at a high school.

The parents thought it quite normal. They had been treated thus, and found it correct. Schools seem to make their reputations on the hockey ground more than in the exams. Mythology, poetry, literature, general history; not even the knowledge of the national glories, like Shakespeare, is imparted. It is the singing teacher who has to tell them about their great men.

Youth is a beautiful thing, but it wants careful nursing. Who would dare pour every day ice-water on seedlings, and expose them to draughts?

No flowers could ever grow, treated thus.

If old age has to stop work, youth must be cautious about starting it.

Youth must patiently wait till the hour has struck.
Youth must be nursed.

3. PHYSICAL AILMENTS—GOITRE

Every physical ailment influences the work of the voice more or less. One may say that as an obstacle to the movement of the larynx a goitre is often the most cumbersome. It is an abnormal enlargement of the thyroid gland,

and often lies right across the throat. It may also lie sideways, but in any case it presses upon the larynx and hinders its freedom of action. It can be visible or invisible, as for many years it may remain small, and therefore undetected. Several interesting cases have come to my notice, some of which I detected by the shape of the throat, as well as by the difficulty it opposed to the vocal training. The effects of the presence of a goitre on the placing of the three registers varies according to the size and position of the swollen gland.

As I always consult a doctor when an abnormal case presents itself, I witnessed several cures which helped me to proceed with my work. But I must admit that I have not met with a complete cure of the complaint, of which I will quote a few cases.

Miss K.—When I started her training, there was no trace of illness, disease, or wrong method, as the girl had never sung. At the first trial I found a sweet, pretty voice, but curiously enough the head register spread downward right to the middle of the medium register and seemed ingrained. Such a defect can be due to youthfulness, but was not so here. It could also come from humming—that remained to be seen. I felt sure of overcoming this fault in time, although it is a slow process to eliminate the head voice from the medium. I worked for some considerable time with the utmost care and patience, and cleared the way to the high E in the middle register. But there we stuck: the E and F were unconquerable and remained in the head register. I sent the pupil to Dr. Krauss, the laryngological specialist of my school in Paris, asking him to examine her. He found nothing; the throat and nose were clear. Patiently we pursued the studies and I cross-examined the girl about her general condition.

Now and then the E and F began to appear in the right place, but after any cold or physical exertion these two notes became uncertain again. As I saw that the road to

success would be slow, and I never proceed with the studies as long as the voice is not made completely responsive, I began to persuade Miss K. to give up her lessons, as I could not tell her how long it would take me to settle the registers. She begged me not to send her away, and having seen even the most difficult voices straightened in my school, she believed firmly in my power to make a singer of her.

It is not only during the lessons that I form the voice and talent of my students, but I have each case present in my mind, and when difficulties show themselves which seem to resist my usual procedure, I pass part of the night scrutinizing and investigating the causes of the difficulties and searching my experience for ways and means to overcome them. I may say with a clear conscience that when the difficulty only arises from the voice itself and not from disobedience or bodily ailments, I invariably have the immense satisfaction of being able to cry " Eureka."

After despairing of Miss K.'s voice, I saw her enter the class one morning very pale and haggard. I had remarked of late that she had lost her smile and looked worried, but I attributed this to her lack of progress. That morning, however, I asked her why she looked so sad; and bursting into tears, she confessed that she had not slept for weeks, that she felt painful nervous phenomena, and that lying awake with wide-open eyes, she would see strange shadows and faces in her room, being thrown into a panic which made her fear the intrusion of thieves and murderers.

I took her by the hand, and as she left the class I urged her to consult a nerve specialist at once. She did so, and what did he find? A small goitre, the growth of which caused all the nervous trouble from which she was suffering. It subjected her larynx to two bad pressures, one directly through the gland, and one through the affected nerves.

The specialist started a very serious cure, which was

crowned by success. He was able to reduce the gland, and all the nervous trouble stopped. My advice was to give up singing, as I understood that this cure might be only temporarily beneficial. And so it was; for after two years' respite the whole trouble began all over again and took a worse form than before. I have just heard that even this second attack was successfully overcome, although it was more serious than the first. Modern science is investigating closely of late the conditions of the glandular system of man. Doctors take some glands out and graft on others, or try to reduce or enlarge them, according to the particular need. The thyroid gland cannot be taken out without injuring the physical and mental condition of man. Its removal may even have death for consequence.

There is a very great celebrity in the singing world of to-day, whose success translates itself into millions of dollars. She bears the burden of a visible goitre, which extends especially to one side of her neck. I have never heard her myself, but I hope I shall one day, as her case interests me intensely. The growth, being greater on one side, does not interfere with the rising of the larynx into the third position, for Galli-Curci easily reaches the high notes required by a light coloratura soprano. Her voice is as pure as a crystal of rare quality, and her staccato admirable. So much I have been able to judge from her gramophone records. If her style and musical interpretation were of the same high order, she would be one of the most phenomenal light sopranos of our time.

The criticism generally made by public and newspapers as to her falling suddenly out of pitch must be, according to my view of the matter, not due to a fault of hearing in the critics, but the defect may actually arise owing to that gland, which may suddenly make its presence felt.

A second case of goitre in my school was that of Miss B. She came with an undersized voice of lovely quality,

incapable of rising higher than E♭. By working steadily, E and F in the high medium were soon conquered. The third register was a much more serious affair, for it took several years to establish her high notes. I felt the whole time that I was fighting with an unseen enemy, and her body, throat, and nose being in perfect condition, I anxiously watched her neck until I distinctly saw a goitre growing. Her general condition being perfect, I did not want to disturb it by cures which might have interfered with her training, and I finished this education with a remarkable success, although she started her career without being able to produce a top C.

4. TONSILS

Tonsils have no direct influence on the production of sound. If they are normal, they are as though non-existing. But if they are diseased and swollen, they alter the quality of the sound, they hurt and contract the space at the root of the tongue, forming an obstruction to breathing and an obstacle to swallowing. In many cases they can close up the throat and provoke suffocation.

If without a specially noticeable cause they show signs of disease; if gargles and other remedies cannot stop a chronic condition of swelling or formation of discharge, the tonsils show clearly that there is also disease in another part of the body which creates this condition. I am, therefore, reluctant to let doctors remove tonsils completely before first of all making sure whether they do not indicate only a temporary illness; or, if the illness should be persistent, investigating the cause of the evil and studying the general condition of the person concerned.

Now in the case of tonsils becoming alarming and their

condition threatening disaster, they must certainly be removed. At the first signs of trouble one should put them under observation. It is very important in such a case, for any one who sings or wishes to sing, that he place himself in a throat specialist's hands. If an operation has to be performed, singers should choose a doctor who deals especially with professionals.

Several throat specialists have told me that if a certain portion of the tonsils is taken away, the person operated on will never sing again, and I know this to be the case.

Tonsils are the only visible glands of our body, and in presenting a chronic ulceration, they perform an act which any ulceration performs in or out of our body, seen or unseen; that is, they declare a hidden evil.

They are the smoke that indicates a fire, the crater of a volcano demonstrating trouble inside the earth. Craters are abscesses of the earth, and abscesses are craters of the body.

In my vast experience, I have often been led to discover serious illnesses in pupils from the condition of their tonsils.

I must admit that when doctors have properly operated on a singer, and the evil was only local, the absence of the tonsils made no difference to the voice.

Men try to obtain more facility in producing high notes, when these are not rightly placed, by pressing their tonsils together. The first result is an ugly sound, the second an injury, because singing under a continuous effort tires the voice without producing ease in high notes. Women are less apt to show this fault and, should they possess it, can get rid of it much more quickly than men.

5. STAMMERING

Can a person who stammers sing?

Yes, and as far as my experience goes, stammering persons do not show their affliction when singing.

I had a pupil, Anna Hope, possessor of a very fine contralto voice, who not once in her whole career as opera and concert singer showed this defect. But when I tried to cure her stammering in speech, I succeeded only partially, her nerves being too much out of control.

What is the cause of stammering?

The cause lies in a nervous weakness. If the nerves can be controlled, stammering ceases. If the nerves connected with the will-power are weak or affected, the patient will not be able to persevere in trying to pronounce without painful contractions of the face and involuntary interruptions of the speech.

With such persons breathing is equally uncontrolled, and this too is a contributory cause of stammering. In such cases nerve specialists should be consulted. They may know of a remedy, or perhaps even of a mental cure by influence and suggestion.

I achieved the best result by trying to persuade the pupils to drop the idea of speaking entirely, and to sing their sentences on sustained notes. As long as their will is strong enough to make a continuous effort, the pronunciation is faultless, but on returning to ordinary speech the stammer reappears instantly as will-power relaxes and the nerves become uncontrolled.

V. THE INTELLECTUAL SIDE

CHAPTER V

THE INTELLECTUAL SIDE

I. INTERPRETATION

Music is among all the arts the only one purely spiritual. It only takes a shape and can only be seized by the performance of the ideas put down on paper by the composer. This performance is achieved by instruments or by the human voice, and the work drops out of the composer's hand the moment the artist takes hold of it. All that has slumbered, hidden away in printed volumes, comes to life when instruments or voices reproduce and translate into sound that which had been imagined by the author and fixed on paper. From this moment he is completely at the mercy of his interpreters.

Thus music is an art born in one man's brain and illustrated and explained by the intelligence of another more or less capable of understanding the real sense or worth of the work he presents to the public. Musical composition is a product of art that after creation is handed over to the good will and knowledge of others. The creator retires into the background and the executant—sometimes executioner—comes to the front. Sometimes the performances of their works are excruciatingly painful to living composers, and it is rarely given to them to be able to correct or direct what is offered to them in performances.

When painters and sculptors have finished their work, it stands before the eyes of all, and if not interfered with and deliberately spoiled, it will survive as it came out of the creator's hand as long as the earth shall last and matter endure. Writers and poets, too, may fear wrong

comprehension and false interpretation of their works, but the printed word is there to defend itself, and there is someone to appraise it at its true value. Nothing can be taken away from or added to a printed book.

With music it is different. The reading of music, printed or in manuscript, is not like the reading of words. Any one endowed with some understanding can more or less dive into the thoughts of the poet, but in the case of music, great musicianship and education is needed even to read the work that is put in front of you with the help of an instrument, to discover its beauties, its defects, its possibilities. How much more rare is it to find persons endowed with sufficient knowledge and musical science as to be able to read music from sheets or books without the aid of any instrument! That is, to read with the eyes the notes written and to hear with the mind their whole effect and significance.

I was once confronted with an admirable instance of such mute sight-reading. One day, waiting with my mother to see Liszt, who was then passing through Vienna, I witnessed this memorable scene. A Dominican monk brought a heavy manuscript for Liszt to inspect. It was an imposing volume of a symphony in full score. Liszt, leaning quietly back in his arm-chair, turned the pages, nodding his head and evidently hearing every note that was put down on the pages in front of him. He bent down, he lifted his head, smiling suddenly, turning a page, passing to another with great haste, frowning, disapproving, beating time with his hand, and exclaiming: "No, no, no; that does not do. This page must be re-done; those instruments will clash"; thereupon entering into a vivid explanation of the dissonance. On his face, all kindness and enlightened friendliness, the whole work could be seen as he was reading, and from time to time a light would flash over his face as some defect or beauty struck his mind. In less than twenty minutes he

had looked through the whole symphony, and with a never-ending patience he handed the manuscript back to the Dominican monk, who stood there, pale and nervous. He even sang several of the passages, explaining their qualities and faults.

This gift is certainly not often met with, and it is only given to some of the greatest. Here I must mention my superlatively gifted pupil Astra Desmond, who, to the delight of all modern British composers, sings the most difficult compositions, reading at sight without hesitation, and with feeling, style, interpretation, and finish. So did the great Pauline Viardot, who read with Wagner at the piano the whole part of Isolde without a single hesitation and with all the necessary dramatic expression.[1] Nobody will ask singers in general to possess such rare qualities. What is asked from singers is rhythm, pure pitch, and clear pronunciation.

But how much more desirable is it for a singer to possess, beside the first qualifications required for appearance in public, sentiment, style, and spiritual insight! An artist can make a success of a work of inferior value by his own interpretative genius, but he can also mutilate and ruin a composition if he does not enter into its true spirit. A work may stand or fall by the interpreter's personality. He can falsify its qualities, exaggerate its climaxes, or mar its beauties and bury it altogether, if he lack understanding. The singer plays a prominent part in music. He is as important almost as the composition itself, but he must take the measure of the work he presents, showing its strong sides and camouflaging the weak points. The composer is at his mercy. How happy the painter, who does not know the betrayals of those who make money out of the interpretation of other people's works!

[1] I had the good luck to find several British pupils highly gifted in this direction, and among them Muriel Brunskill ranks high.

One gift can save a composition—the rare gift called genius. Genius is born, not made, and nothing can ever act as a satisfactory substitute for it. Genius may make up for a defective education and for a lack of psychological insight. Genius conceives and guesses what has to be dinned into others. Yet genius alone will not be able to reproduce worthily music of different periods. To give a work its whole significance, all the different styles must have been studied, and the most gifted artist who knows only modern music will not be able to do justice to the classics without the necessary education.

There are two distinct kinds of interpretation: one of the music itself, which is largely based on knowledge of all styles as well as on the special gift of understanding composition in general; the other of the sense of the words in opera, oratorio, or songs, the penetrating of the character and moods of the personage represented on the stage or of the feelings or situations outlined in song. To give the music performed its right shape, rhythm, colour, and sentiment, one must have learned at the sources where all the great traditions are upheld. To penetrate the spirit of words or character, one must have a certain literary education, some knowledge of the world's history, a keen human feeling, and above all imagination. One is not always asked to represent and portray feelings one has met with in life; in fact, it would be quite impossible to expect an artist to have learned by his own experience all that he is asked to reproduce. Imagination makes up for what is lacking in personal experience, and a true artist must be able to make the hearers believe that what he represents is really happening.

Here a question arises which has often been discussed by critics and artists. Should the artist shed real tears, should he feel utterly unhappy when describing painful situations or feelings, or should he remain calm and serene in his

innermost soul whilst depicting to the hearers the most blood-curdling and hair-raising situations or sufferings? I myself have never believed in the downpour of tears on an actor's cheeks. When the actor cries, the eyes of the public remain dry, but if the actor has, in studying the part, gone deep into the meaning of what he has to represent, if he has a human heart capable of suffering, then, having overcome with all his energy the overwhelming feelings that would rob him of his real power of interpretation, and standing above all suffering, although having passed through it, he will offer the hearer and onlooker the complete and perfect picture of grief and desolation without shedding a single tear. Letting his feelings run away with him, as he might in everyday life, would hinder him from executing his part in perfect style and from moving his audience.

It is only when, alone in your studio, you have overcome all the obtrusive lower forms and ordinary outward signs of pain, that you can rise to the greatest heights in artistic representation. I have had the good fortune of hearing in my childhood the most stupendous actor who ever walked the stage, Tommaso Salvini. This man, who would have moved rocks, never in any one of his most pathetic parts allowed himself the smallest of unworthy sentimental effects, but stood always like a giant above his own impersonation.

In singing, even more than in declamation, the artist must be in full possession of his nervous power and be able to dominate his feelings. The smooth running of a perfect voice-production that never leaves the line of vocal beauty does not allow emotions to overpower the artist. Celebrities who have made a certain effect on more or less uneducated crowds have often won their approval and stirred their emotions by very cheap means. Sighs and sobs must be very sparingly used, and the slurring and scooping resorted

by most of singers to convince the hearer of their grief-shaken hearts, are means to be despised and left alone. When I remember the effect of a single gesture or word from Salvini, or the power and immensity of Victor Maurel's rendering, in Verdi's *Otello*, of the famous words of Iago: "E il tuo demon son io" (And I am your demon), then indeed can I say that I have heard the giants of the art of interpretation. My father's last words in the "Erlking" "In seinen Armen das Kind war tot," still makes my hair stand on end when I think of it, and he sang these words motionless, with subdued tones, his voice sinking to a whisper but articulating sharply each word. My mother's greatest pupil, and the most compelling dramatic soprano who ever existed, Gabrielle Krauss, could move the whole of the public in the Paris Opera House with a single phrase, for when she said the simple words, "Sois béni," in Gounod's *Sapho*, not one eye remained dry from the first boxes to the topmost tier. The feelings of all were stirred to a pitch unknown before or after. When, in the *Tribut de Zamora* by Gounod, she sang the National Iberian Hymn, not one person remained seated, and never have I witnessed a similar occurrence. And this is what that great singer, Lilli Lehmann, who was so classic and perfect in the interpretation of music, never achieved in the rendering of feelings. She left one cold, and her greatness was at freezing-point. But I prefer this to the exaggerated second-rate Italian performer, who sobs, cries, and shouts, throwing his arms up to the skies, and with all his efforts never reaches a single heart.

If the interpretation on the stage necessitates constant action, this does not mean that one has to do what in stage-craft is called "swimming." Great moderation and distinction in gesture is preferable to any wild demeanour. On the concert platform this is an even more delicate matter. The artists who run about on the concert platform, pacing restlessly and wildly from one end to the other, rolling their eyes, making extravagant movements with their heads or arms, must immediately be classed as second or third-rate, whatever their reputation may be. What the lips cannot express, the hands will not. Pianists throwing their hands and arms into the air, leaning down so as almost to play the piano with their noses; cellists, especially ladies, clasping their instrument and pressing it fervently against their body, showing the whites of their eyes, and nearly expiring at the end of every phrase; violinists with their instrument held up in the air, swinging it up and down; all these ridiculous performers want to persuade the public of their deep feeling and passionate ardour, but only show that they do not know the very first principle of great art—simplicity.

Some artists whom I bear in mind in speaking of a newly introduced vice have done a great deal to spread it; and, like many other things started by famous people, it is taken up by smaller ones who think to raise themselves to the same level by copying faults for which we may pardon those who originated the fashion when they have talent, but never those who imitate them. The vice I mean is performance with closed eyes.

I cannot be emphatic enough in condemning this most unsympathetic and ridiculous habit. The foremost reason for combating such an affectation is that those who cultivate it give the impression of being blind and so immediately bring to mind the poor fiddler at the street-corner. Another, and surely the greatest, reason for keeping the eyes open is that they are the soul's only communication with the outside world. Close your eyes and you are instantly separated from your public, have locked it out from your sanctuary.

Shall we mention the small person who sings a song on tiptoe and sends imploring looks up to the ceiling? This

is a comic sight met with everywhere, and never considered by anybody.

To start serious interpretation, you must first get your public in hand. This can only be done by a dignified position and demeanour, by tasteful and unobtrusive clothing, by a complete concentration on the subject you are to represent and a simple way of transmitting the message entrusted to you.

The public, who expects to be amused or moved, becomes the final judge of what is offered by the artist, and soon finds out who you are. Such is the mystery of an assembly of many minds. The slightest defect in your voice, a wrong movement of your head, bad breathing, anything in short that is not in keeping with æsthetic rules and with the sense of the words you are interpreting, disturbs, distresses, and may even disgust the hearers, who become very sensitive in a concert-room, even when they are not so in life. It would be just as wrong for the singer to stand motionless in an opera, regarding the stage as a concert platform and thinking of nothing but the voice. Old Italian singers used to give such spectacles of immobility, and this reminds me of a very silly little story which, all the same, makes me smile each time I remember it. On a small Sicilian operatic stage, a newly engaged tenor, occupied only with his voice, ran through his principal air without altering his position. The conductor became restless, and when in the orchestra the *fortissimo* turned into *mezzo-forte*, he called out to the singer: " For heaven's sake, move on, man "; to which the singer calmly replied: " I am paid to sing, not to move."

Everything at its right time and in its right place, that is what will be found to impress the public.

The actor, confronted with a work that has been born of a poet's imagination, tries to penetrate the aim and sense of the lines given to him. The poet thinks, and shapes

his thought. The composer, who finds a poem ready-shaped, must unravel the poet's intentions, re-think and re-form them, and at last translate them into sounds. The singer finally reproduces both creations and has to add his own to them. First of all he must at all costs preserve the shape of the music. As to the poem, his interpretation may be given a larger scope. When a singer performs the task given to him, he is the third intelligence set in motion and the final one to present the work properly from every point of view. Freedom is given to him in the conception of character, in the intonation of certain phrases, and in the rendering of the whole part. But the possibilities offered to him are limited, for he can in no way allow himself fundamental alterations of the work he is called upon to interpret. All the same, talent or genius will find a way of varying it infinitely, and thus we may sometimes see the same part studied from a completely new standpoint and yet remaining successful.

My most vivid recollections are those of the different Carmens I have seen in my life. I had the good fortune to see the last performances of Galli-Marié, who created that part at the Paris Opéra-Comique. She gave an impressive impersonation that satisfied my imagination completely. From the first minute she stepped behind the footlights she was a proud, hard, cold coquette, for whom nothing existed but the lover of the moment, who hated the man she had loved when her fancy was taken by another, incapable of a smile, and spreading tragedy round her. A being square and strong, with an unquenchable burning fire in her soul, despising all but the impulse of her moods and showing the courage of a lioness both in love and hatred. The second best Carmen I heard was Pauline Lucca. Not second in the sense of taking a place below Galli-Marié; no. She only comes second in my remembrance. Her Carmen was a being of roguishness,

coquettish moods, and variability, of a light character, following the first impulse and in love with love. Her smile was irresistible. The seduction exercised on her victims was simply entrancing. Her anger and happiness were of an elemental nature, and you could well understand a Don José who would rather kill her than let her follow the Toreador.

The Carmen of Calvé was again a completely different being. Grace, beauty, seductive charm, but an almost exclusively French *coquetterie* were the characteristics of her interpretation. Hers was not a sombre mood. Her anger was that of a French girl who had never seen Spain, her love might have been the love of any drawing-room coquette. One German woman, Frau Gutheil-Schoeder, gave a magnificent performance of Carmen in Prague when I made my début there as Brünnhilde. She was completely different from any one I have seen. The part was perhaps not the direct outcome of elemental temperament, but it was a study most interesting and refined in every detail. She had scarcely a voice large enough to fill the theatre, but her subtlety, imaginative refinement, and clever acting held your attention without interruption. She was the best-dressed Carmen, but certainly no more a *cigarrera*, lover of a toreador, than Calvé. Carmen was first written for a contralto or mezzo-soprano, and Madame Galli-Marié sang it so, although her voice could lend no charm to the beautiful music, for it was ugly and rough at the time I heard her, which was at the end of her career. Pauline Lucca had a gorgeous lyrico-dramatic soprano. She sang without method, but voice and temperament paved a way to her triumphs. Calvé, when she worked with my mother, had originally a coloratura soprano, which after her dramatic succes as Santuzza in *Cavalleria* had to serve her in *Carmen*, which, by the way, was transposed up in several important passages to suit her voice. Madame Gutheil-Schoeder had,

so to say, no voice at all, and her very small soprano, lacking in essential beauty, was the least of her assets, the whole of her success being due to her interpretation.

It comes to this, then: although these four Carmens sang the notes written by the composer and tried to impersonate the character of Carmen, each gave a completely different reading of the character and each in turn satisfied and pleased their different audiences.

In England, and on the English operatic stage, the best Carmen was my pupil Phyllis Archibald. Hers is an unsophisticated, natural, passionate, simple interpretation, sometimes a little rough in detail, but certainly elemental, strong and convincing. She sang it in many countries, and a short time ago on an operatic tour with Melba in Australia.

Such is the latitude given to artists in their interpretation of works of art, and although the possibilities of devising new readings of a known type of work become more limited in time, there is still a wide field left open for the imaginative artist.

When I was a young girl, just out of school in Paris, singers were not of the intellectual type. Few had personality and a gift of interpretation. They lacked style and they treated music with the utmost disregard of the composer's intentions. To please themselves and to make certain cheap effects, they would change important passages or endings of airs and songs, or introduce top notes as often as they thought fit to bring the house down.

This simply made Gounod despair. He had quite an exceptional affection for me, young girl that I was, and used to sing to me, in his hoarse, sympathetic voice, old and new compositions and to send for me when he had a new song, wanting first to hear it from me, who then had so little voice. "It does me good," he would say, "to hear you sing my music, because you sing it as I conceived it, and artists, whoever they may be, and whatever large salaries

they may get at the Grand Opéra, will ruin my poor little songs."

One day the celebrated baritone, Faure, walked out of his studio just as I was going in. Passing his fingers through his white, flowing hair, with his big eyes rolling desperately, Gounod said on closing the door behind the visitor: "Tu vois, ma petite Blanchette, voilà mes assassins." And he sat down at the piano, saying: "I will show you now what he did to my song." He then started to play the "Chanson du Printemps" ("Viens, enfant"), a delightful, flowing melody with no rests, no pauses or cocktails, just a simple song that must appeal by its simplicity and where a singer may not put anything in or take anything out without damage. He may simply sing it charmingly and let it go its own way, but Gounod showed me that Faure had not wanted to sing his song merely to show its beauty, but he had put Monsieur Faure in the place of the song and altered several passages, dwelling on certain notes, to make his effects more certain, thus changing the character of the piece entirely. "That is," said Gounod, "how they kill my work. You see, *ma petite* Blanchette," he said, "when you even hum one of my smallest melodies, I see that your soul respects my creation. You love what you sing, and you do not put yourself before it, wanting to shine for your own purposes, but you make my work shine, and this is a solace to my heart."

Gounod would have seemed to many people whose dreams do not take high flights, to be given to exaggerating his despair of his interpreters; but his taste was so utterly refined, and so very different from the taste of the day, that only very subtle minds could really follow his intentions. He did not give singing lessons at all, but he liked very much to impart to girls of intelligence with sympathetic voices some of his melodies, which celebrated artists seemed to overload with their own intentions and in

consequence to spoil for him. One day he again sent for me. A new song had been published, the proof was lying on his piano, and he said to me: "Quick, quick, sing me my little song before any one comes to spoil it." He then gave it to me as a souvenir, writing with blue pencil some affectionate words on the copy. That very moment an artist from the Opéra was announced, and reading the card, Gounod said to the footman: "Ask the gentleman up." Turning to me and holding his head between his hands, sending desperate looks up to heaven, he exclaimed: "Here is another one who is going to murder my music."

I cannot refrain from telling a delightful little story Léo Delibes told one day at luncheon at my mother's house concerning the ultra-refined demands Gounod made on singers. A young girl friend of his daughter's, after much pleading, obtained a voice trial from the great master. While Delibes was waiting in his studio, he witnessed the following delightful scene. Gounod, taking the girl by the hand, put her in front of the piano and said to her: "You want me to hear your voice? I love everything that is beautiful and hate all ugly sounds. Think over well what I ask you to sing before you sing it. Collect all your wits and listen to my words. Before uttering a note, place your bow well. Let the urn of your voice pour forth its content. And give me a mauve sound in which I shall be able to wash my hands." And with rolling eyes he made the gesture of Lady Macbeth in the famous scene.

The greatest difficulty in the interpretation of music and poetry is to fix decisively and for all time the way artists should present it to the public. This is practically an impossibility and it certainly cannot be done by means of written words. There is one guidance only, and that is oral, personal tradition handed down from one artist to another. There is no book in which all those subtle rules can be laid down. All the same, I think that to-day we

have an invention which may play an important part in the transmission of music and its rendering. I mean the gramophone. It is possible to form a judgment of artists with this wonderful machine. The death of Othello, sung by Tamagno, the death of Boris Godounov, sung by Chaliapin, negro spirituals sung by Paul Robeson, the air from *Le Caïd* by Plançon, or a solo from *Pagliacci* by Caruso—these are models of reproduction and can give an idea of what these artists were able to do and how things should be done.

One of the griefs of my life is that I have not been able to transmit to the next generation, or even to the present one, my own interpretations. I may say that I am the only living artist of renown, loved by the public and praised to the skies by all critics, whose gramophone records cannot be bought and have not been placed before the world. The evil spirit that has persecuted me all through my artistic life here too stood between me and the public. Gramophone records which had been made were destroyed in the factories by command. Among them there were really remarkable ones that were the outcome of one single trial made for "His Master's Voice" in Berlin, where I was told that some of the celebrities had to try twenty or thirty times before a perfect disk could be obtained. Having sold the rights of my records instead of making a royalty contract, I could not go to law, and in consequence my gramophone plates, which had never been offered to the public, disappeared for ever. A few are in my possession, as I was permitted to buy them back, and perhaps one day my grandchildren will hear my voice when I am gone—that is, if they take any interest in music.

Let us go back to interpretation. Artists in general may vary in their expression according to different moods. It may happen that, after having been successful, one may suddenly, through the work of the imagination or some

occurrence of everyday life, wish to change an effect and express the same words in a different spirit.

It may also happen that, being indisposed, one is unable to give the same interpretation of some passages as one had previously done, the physical means of expression having to be suddenly altered. Alboni told me how one night, having a serious cold, she felt more than ever the transition from medium to chest voice, which used to trouble her even when she was quite fit. One of the principal points in the air she sang, where the utmost dramatic expression in full force was required, could not be faced by her on that night, as she could not count on the perfection and strength of certain notes. The words were something like "Monster, thou must die." They had to be shouted with full voice into some traitor's face, but feeling unable to get quantity and quality in the required place, she decided suddenly, following her inspiration, to creep quite near to her partner and to speak these words into his ear as one breathless and half demented, without singing a note. A storm of applause followed: Alboni had found a new interpretation, dictated by necessity, and the critics mentioned this passage specially in the morning papers as having been thrilling.

Having received throughout the world the most enthusiastic criticism of my singing of Schubert's "Erlking," I must explain here what vision guided my rendering. The first octaves at the opening bars generally put me instantaneously into the situation, and I no longer know who I am, or where I am. But *I am* in a dark forest, hearing a tremendous storm passing through the branches of the trees, *I am* on horseback, flying through space, and *I am* now the child, now the father. As a child would only whisper when frightened to death, but finding its calls for help not understood, grow more and more terrified, the supplications become louder and louder, ending at

last in a frantic outcry. His fear and despair have been aroused by the insinuating voice of the Erlking, who, as the legend tells, inhabited the woods, threatening the passers-by as midnight approached. It was the child only who saw the Erlking and his daughters, and heard their spirit voices. The father, strong and steady of heart, at first smiles at the child's fears. His attention, after the second desperate call of the child, begins to concentrate into watchfulness. After the last horrified cry his heart is shaken, his anxiety stirred; he whips his horse with renewed energy, and hastens home, clutching the child to his breast. The child must have seen something, or he must be delirious with fever. A lurking danger shakes even his courage by this time. Arriving home, and tearing the cloak from his child's face, which he had buried in its folds, he finds it dead. Here I cannot whisper, because it seems unnatural; I cannot shout, because when you are struck right to the heart and look into your dead child's face, you cannot do so either. Speaking on the father's behalf, as you do in the song, saying "And in his arms his child was dead," you can only say it low-voiced, with your heart constricted by pity and grief.

But in all this, the principal thing is the capacity, first of all, to see what happens in the poem or in the lines which you have to sing or speak. Those devoid of imagination, which happens to be the lot of many, may, with great painstaking, try to put the right expression into the words by study or imitation, but when the interpreter does not actually see and feel, the public will remain unmoved. For here again we have the proof of that mysterious spiritual bond between the artist's soul and the public.

The public makes no mistakes, hence hero worship. It is true that in these days cleverly displayed advertising can predispose the public to a favourable reception of a new artist. Joyful expectations can be worked up, but the

higher the hopes are running, the greater the fulfilment of those hopes must be. If the advertisement has exceeded the capacities of the performer, only disappointment will follow.

Imagination and temperament cannot be bought nor taught, and if technique is a fine thing to possess, it will never make up for lack of originality in any artist.

And now I must be quite candid. All those big works performed with the help of artificial lighting, chorus, and large orchestras, can give much pleasure and delight, and artists can display histrionic and dramatic talent to the satisfaction of all. But what is there that can beat a beautiful, simple song? Nothing whatever. The song is complete in itself. It is shape, costume, acting, limelight, all in one, concentrated beauty depending on one heart, one brain, one voice, one pair of lips. It is a vast world, endless in its variety. How can anything excel "Nacht und Träume" (Schubert)? What can ever take the place of Schumann's "Nussbaum"? Are we all not perfectly happy on hearing such a song sung with the perfect simplicity that is the mark of art in its highest form?

I give all the operas for one song. The opera singer must sing what is prescribed for him. The songster can choose in the vast literature of the world what is most congenial to his gifts, and can thus offer a more perfect joy and happiness. And after all, what are we all longing to find on our lonely roads of life? Just a little ray of happiness, a little glimpse of joy—and that is what a song can give.

2. "BEL CANTO"

There is total ignorance concerning the term *bel canto*. People speak of *bel canto* as they speak of the craters in the moon. Although unaware of what it really means, they think that *bel canto* is a perfect Italian method.

In former times, when every serious teacher knew the traditions of mechanism and style, it meant literally "beautiful singing," based on the rules practised by the great artists of the past. But traditions being gradually lost, the public continued to use the term *bel canto* in referring to the singing of the celebrities of the day.

Slowly this expression changed its meaning, and now people really believe that *bel canto* is a special method, in fact the one and only method. Thus you find in musicians' advertisements that teachers profess the *bel canto*, and I myself have been approached by parents who brought new students to me with the question: "Do you teach *bel canto*?" This question no doubt implies the conviction that in being taught *bel canto*, their children will learn the best possible method and develop an impeccable style.

That teachers possessed of good style are invariably able to train voices is a fallacy. Even in former times women's voices were often mistrained and ruined. For men some very good teachers could be found in Italy at all times.

The woman's voice and the rules by which alone it can be trained to perfection found their true master in Garcia II. Even his father, who had worked with the star masters of his time, was not skilled in the science of voice training, concerning especially the female voice.

If you read the letters written by Mozart to his father when he toured Italy as a young boy, you will find him complaining bitterly about the terrific shouting of women singers and the ear-piercing shrieks of the most celebrated

prima donnas. There may still be some masters to-day who possess the traditions of style and execution of the special Italian school, but as regards voice-production, if Mozart came back, he would find singers at precisely the point he left them at the end of his journey.

To be a great singer, you must certainly possess the secret of *bel canto*. You may be a French or German celebrity and earn pounds and dollars in quantity, but you cannot be called a really great singer unless you have passed through the schooling of the old Italian traditions before starting to specialize in different repertories or languages. The Italian language must be employed as a matter of course when the student begins to sing with words. It is the most beautiful language of all, but it also is the most suitable, as its pure vowels are conducive to the production of beautiful sounds.

Often, on hearing singers trained exclusively in their own languages of such different characters as Norwegian, English, Russian, etc., you can tell at once by certain guttural sounds, hard pronunciation, and unmusical displacing of vowel values that they have never learned to sing in Italian. Great singers, be they German and called Lilli Lehmann, or Polish and called De Reszke, or French and called Maurel, Plançon, or what not, quite evidently based all their art on the rules of the old Italian *bel canto*. The source of their success sprang from the country where the finest traditions had been preserved.

In composition the styles of various countries naturally differ, but the Italian style of interpretation once acquired, every other style performed will benefit by it. Wagner understood this so well that he wrote to Garcia, on sending his sister Johanna to him as a pupil: "I am sending you my sister. I put her confidently into your skilful hands. In singing I admit only the old Italian method. I wish my sister to learn it from you, just as I wish all artists who

sing my music were educated in the Italian school. You, who are considered the greatest singing master of our days, will make her the singer I wish her to be."

This is the letter Garcia spoke of to me when I visited him one day at his house in London, "Mon Abri," at Cricklewood. The letter itself was destroyed by him, as were a great number of other letters from Wagner and other celebrities addressed to him. His modesty and simplicity kept him from keeping any of the marvellous testimonials given to him by the greatest musicians of his time.

He was a retiring man, living only for the science of song, sober in words and actions, surrounded only by his family, hidden under the great shadow of London, unseen and never heard except by a few faithful disciples, and believed dead long before he left this world. The day of his death, when the papers poured forth columns of obituaries of the great man, the indescribable indifference of the British towards art and artists was painfully revealed. There was scarcely a person in London who did not say: "What, that old man lived, and in London too, and we did not know it? How curious!"

Well, if there ever was one who worked in the service of *bel canto*, adding to it the discovery of the actual secret vocal mechanism, it was he, Garcia the second.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

I. THE VOICE AND ALL INSTRUMENTS

To which class of instrument does the voice belong?

Two categories exist, string and wind instruments. The voice belongs to both kinds: it is a wind and string instrument combined. The vocal cords are the strings, the lungs furnish the air that sets them in motion.

The instrument most resembling the voice in its general construction is the organ, but the resemblance extends only to the fact that it has tone-producing pipes; the keyboards alone show, and the air representing the tone-producing power is furnished from beneath or from the sides, as it is by the lungs of man, which, also unseen, send the air to the larynx. It is in this tone-production by air and in the possession of three distinct factors, placed apart but working together, that the resemblance lies.

Another instrument that works rather like the human voice, in so far as it has cords for sound and wind for motor, is the Æolian harp. Its shape resembles Orpheus's lute, and it is constructed of wood, strung with nearly as many cords as an ordinary harp. The Irish Free State bears this instrument in its coat of arms. It is seldom met with, except in Ireland, where it is hung from either a doorway or a high tree, and its strings are set vibrating by the breeze. As they are simply attached to the sounding-board, without keys, they can never be altered or tuned, and the wind passing through them produces a strange melancholy wailing.

The string instruments in general have nothing in common with the voice, except that the sound is produced by cords. The cords, however, can only vibrate and resound by the touch of a bow or by being hit with a stick, as in the case of the cymbalom. Strings without a bow can only be made to speak in staccato tones when plucked with the fingers.

Wind instruments have only one thing in common with the voice, and that is that the air is made to vibrate inside wood or brass tubes, the sounding-boards of which are shortened or lengthened. The fingers, touching the keys that strike on metal tongues, make them sound, and these sounds are higher or lower as the tube carrying the air becomes longer or shorter.

The human voice stands alone, for it lives and dies with its owner. It cannot be handed down and exists only as long as a human being, having heard it, can bring it back to memory, although incapable of making any one partake in this feat of mind. Perhaps the day will come when thoughts, and therefore music, will be recorded for miraculous vehicles of reproduction.

As regards remembering and recording, the gramophone now forms a living library in which you may choose books and turn their pages, reviving thus in nearly all its strength and beauty the memory of the beloved voices of all the artists who can be heard no more in the flesh.

2. THE VOICE I LOVED, AND ANOTHER

She entered my London studio after having arranged an appointment. Letters do not tell us much about people, except that paper, handwriting, and addresses sometimes give a glimpse of what position they hold in life. Here there was none of this indication. The letter was simplicity itself and might have represented anybody.

She entered the room, very modest, simply dressed. She spoke to me with a soft, mellow voice.

I never ask questions. I could not make out whether she was British or American, but felt that she might be a Briton who had touched America.

There was mystery about her. As I am not curious, I never found out who she was or where she came from. Her presence was sufficient. It was all charm, sadness, and sweetness. She was very pale and had beautiful large, black eyes with a velvety radiance. Looking at them before I listened to her voice, I thought of what Gounod used to say to me: " Tu sais, ma petite Blanchette, on a toujours la voix de ses yeux." She looked frightfully delicate, and when she drew her first breath to let me hear her voice, she scarcely breathed at all. It looked as though she could not.

But at that first note she produced, my heart stopped beating. Others following, that first impression was only confirmed. It was a tender, sweet, round, warm, touching voice that crept at once into the farthest recesses of the soul.

It may be, and in fact is almost certain, that everybody does not hear in a voice what I hear, or others endowed, like me, with a sensitive ear and over-sensitive understanding. To me this was a revelation of beauty. I still hear her, and I will hear her as long as I shall have a memory.

This is also true of every voice that has struck my ear. My aural memory is simply phenomenal; and could I by some device reproduce the voices I have heard since my first infancy, I could make them pass before people's hearing as pictures are shown in museums. I remember every sound in the voices of my mother's pupils, their qualities, their faults, their difficulties, their start, progress, and finish.

Why can I not let you hear the wonderful instrument of that simple little girl? You could then enjoy it as I do when I think of it, and your tears would flow down your

cheeks as mine did. Her voice lives in me, and thanks to the wonderful miracle of our mentality, I can make it live again whenever I wish.

Her education was slow and difficult. There was no health, no strength. The first little song—oh, it was quite a small old English song, which perhaps has never stirred anybody—was quite good enough to bring out every possible emotion in the hearer. The words were: "I heard a voice so sweet and low."

Yes, sweet and low it was; deep and overwhelmingly beautiful, and I cannot think of it without feeling my eyes burning with tears.

She must be dead. She was so ill. She entered the hospital several times to be operated on, but came back weaker and paler. Singing was everything to her, but I, who can see many unseen things, knew that she could not live.

I did not dare to break that only joy she had in life, which was to sing. Her life must have been filled with sadness, and song seemed to be the last and only thing that made life worth living for her. I could see that in her life there was no future but the hospital, and she seemed to know it too. We never spoke about it. She had a contralto voice of penetrating beauty; soft, deep, and lulling your heart into wondrous calm. That small song, sung by her, spoke of herself: "I heard a voice so sweet and low."

Yes, I heard it, and why am I incapable of reproducing it and letting you hear it? I can only think of it, but I have loved it, and I still love it.

The last time she left for hospital I felt that I should not see her again. She looked at me with a long glance that seemed to say farewell. I never heard her again, nor of her. She must be dead. My pen falls from my fingers: "I heard a voice so sweet and low."

And another:

This was quite another human being. A little Spanish girl, small and graceful. As she walked in, you would have thought she had been blown in and that she used wings instead of feet. She adored singing and dancing. Her voice was a star soprano of the very first order. She had not much memory, not much breath, and great difficulty with rhythm, lacked a fundamental education, and an inborn national laziness made it very difficult to construct a repertory for her. Her high notes were simply supernatural. The whole voice was wonderful, but she could not learn as others did, and to all my complaints she opposed only sweet kisses and smiles. When she knew a song, she sang it remarkably well, and everything she did was enveloped in charm and poetry. Her voice never seemed to come out of her body, it sounded so light, and the attack of her notes was so silky and well pitched, it was as though her breath were singing and not she. It seemed to come from somewhere outside.

bone conduction

She too must have had a difficult and sad life. She used to tell me of a fair little boy with a head covered with curls, and as she spoke of him it sounded truly as if he had fallen from the blue sky. One day she cried, for she had taken him to the Little Sisters in a convent. I did not inquire; I cried with her and it was all so sad. Did she feel then what I could not guess, that this child one day might be left alone in the world? She did the right thing. And the most unexpected happened. One day, not having seen her for a while and wondering what had become of her, I received a letter from the director of a mad-house, telling me that she was one of his incurable inmates and that, remembering my name and my address, she had insisted on letting me know that she was ill. It was a blow to me as a woman and a teacher. Such voices as hers you rarely meet in a lifetime. My poor little Ophelia!

Here again my hopes were shattered. You build up a splendid mansion with great painstaking on the top of a high mountain, and in one night a hurricane throws the edifice of all your hopes and efforts to the ground.

That wonderful voice will only be heard now within the walls of an asylum. But I can hear her, and always will.

Poor little crickets, who will never sing in the fields again! Shall we hear all those voices again one day—all those wonderful, sweet voices that filled my heart with indescribable happiness, and whose careers were broken by persecution or illness? Will they be able to sing once more where our humanity ceases and life no longer interposes any obstacles between us and our souls?

3. A WORD TO TEACHERS AND PUPILS

If any one of those whose special ambition is to become a professional singer has one day the desire, or is obliged, to teach, he should be well aware of the heavy task that awaits him. Teachers must forget themselves and all their personal ambitions, as individual singers, must stand back, their will-power being solely concentrated on the furthering of the pupils' interests. The teacher must start by penetrating character and personality, as well as the voice material. He must try to gain the loving confidence of the pupil, and may never consider him as a dictator does a crushed slave. Only friendship can guide and impart successfully.

Love only gives the necessary patience to deal with so many individualities and voices, with educations of different degrees. Love only can build bridges over the difficulties of various kinds that may present themselves in the course of an education; it can perform the miracle of bringing to maturity voice and soul of those who have put themselves and their future into the teacher's hands.

The teacher who is indifferent or too severe will never see the dormant capacities of his pupil developed to their utmost possibilities. The fruit growing without sun, or storm-shaken, will fall from the tree before reaching its full maturity.

Having given all your knowledge, do not expect gratitude. The perfect result of your efforts must be the reward.

If you find a few who remember you after years of successful careers, you can praise the Lord; because the joy of finding one beautiful soul makes up for the suffering that hundreds of indifferent ones have imposed upon your aching heart.

Pupils should never forget that there is not gold enough on earth to pay teaching crowned by success. But remembrance is another and an ever-welcome reward.

AFTERWORD

HERE I stop, although I could go on for ever talking about the art and science that has occupied the largest part of my life.

I am of the vanishing generation, and having put down the experience of two hundred and twenty years gathered by Garcia, my parents, and myself, using the one and only method for ourselves as well as for others, I felt that I had to leave my knowledge to the coming generation, so as to put a guide into their hands to carry them through the labyrinth of methods out of which, with the help of this book, they will surely find their way to light and truth.

The only proof of a method is the result, and this method has furnished the universe with stars, great and minor, but who all followed faithfully the instructions received. Never leaving the path shown to them, some have earned millions and the others have led happy and honoured lives, thanks to their work.

In our school it has never happened that money or protection paved the way to success and fortune. All our pupils have really worked to reach the temple of fame.

The sad spectacle which offers itself to our astonished eyes in these days was an unknown thing in the past. I refer to the shocking condition in which singers, and especially Americans, try to reach the footlights in Europe. Money takes the place of talent, and while in former times talent alone was in demand, those who have the power of guiding beginners to glory have become, alas, too familiar with a new custom that fills the coffers of opera houses.

When the passions that divide human beings, when professional hatred and jealousy pass away; when personalities no more stand in each other's way fighting for bread and fame, then will dawn the day on which lies and inventions will fade like shadows into nothing, and truth begin to triumph.

So may it be when I am no more.

This little booklet will be put into every singer's hands, and teachers will eagerly study it, especially those who honestly want to do the right thing. I dare say this method will even be obligatory upon those who impart the science of song, just as the world had to bow to vaccination, once its value was recognized.

There are never two truths in the same line. There can only be one.

In this case, judgment will be made easy by the simple fact that all who follow the right lines will succeed and show perfection, and that those who insist on pursuing other methods will prove failures because their voices will become uncontrollable or disappear altogether.

Now my last word. The aim of my life is to form singers; but I hope to see teachers in great numbers, hailing from all countries, learning this method, and ready to go and preach it everywhere. But, in order to prevent unworthy persons from claiming to have studied with me and also to enlighten everybody as to the value of the teachers who claim to be my pupils, I will henceforth give diplomas of three degrees in which I shall testify to the ability of all teachers leaving my school.