CHURCH CHOIR TRAINING

BY

H. W. RICHARDS
MUS.DOC., ETC.
Professor of the Organ and Choir Training in the Royal Academy of Music,
Organist and Choirmaster of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, W.,
and author of "Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services."

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TO

CHARLES MACPHERSON, MUS.DOC.

(Organist at St. Paul's Cathedral and President of the Royal College of Organists, 1921-22)
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PREFACE

This book is a reprint in an extended form of three lectures which were given at the invitation of the Council of the Royal College of Organists, at Hart Street, Bloomsbury, in 1908.

The published copies of these lectures were soon disposed of, and in response to many subsequent enquiries for them, the Author has been led to re-issue the lectures in the manner set forth in the ensuing chapters.

He has tried to avoid dealing with questions relating to the function of the Organist as an Accompanist, as those have been treated in his former work, "The Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services" (No. 2 of this Series of Handbooks on Music).

It is hoped that the points touched upon in this volume may form a foundation upon which any choirmaster interested in his important work can build for himself; after he has begun on the lines herein suggested, stern experience must do the rest. The young choirmaster will learn far more from it than is possible from any book.

H. W. RICHARDS.

16 Norfolk Square,
LONDON, W.2, 1921.
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The aim of this book is not to deal exhaustively with every detail either of singing or of choir training, but to give, as far as possible in a small space, practical advice on general points too often overlooked or neglected, for the benefit of those who need it, viz., those choirmasters who have to do the best they can with poorly paid or voluntary choirs in small parish churches. These constitute the large majority in our land, and it is not always sufficiently recognized what an exceedingly hard task they are called upon to perform.

Where there is a choir school or a rich endowment things are infinitely simplified; but where means are restricted, and a man has, so to speak, to make bricks without straw, the difficulties are such as can hardly be imagined by his more fortunate brother in art. With these difficulties it is proposed to deal in the following chapters.

In handbooks on the subject one is usually met at the very outset by such advice as the following: "Be sure to choose your boys from refined homes"; "Practise Absurd advice. them regularly every day"; "Never allow your boys to shout in the streets." To the choirmaster of the ordinary church these are counsels of perfection, disheartening rather than helpful. If these conditions can be enforced they will be all to the good; but how is a man to do this when it is a matter of difficulty to get together a choir of voices at all? How, indeed, is he to obtain carefully finished results from two practices a week, perhaps with boys of the roughest sort who spend their spare time yelling in the streets? This is no overdrawn picture; countless instances could be cited where these conditions prevail.

In these circumstances lies the crux; and if this book helps anyone to confront his uphill work more happily and hopefully, it will be a great gratification to the writer. Of course it will
be impossible to confine our remarks to suit only cases of the above description, and it is to be hoped that all, however they may be placed, may find some helpful suggestions which will meet their special needs.

It is not the purpose of the book to enter upon the discussion of such collateral questions as that of choirmaster v. clergy—that perennial and fertile theme on which so much has been said and written. One thing, however, is certain, namely, that no smooth working can be possible unless there are sympathy and understanding, and some give and take on both sides. It is obviously a great gain to secure the sympathetic help of the rector or vicar, for many little differences which are apt to be magnified beyond what their importance deserves can often be set right by the exercise of tact and forbearance. The vicar may know nothing of music, but he can easily perceive how full of thorns is a choirmaster's lot—by no means a bed of roses; and, on the other hand, the choirmaster must always keep in mind that the vicar is the head of the church and the chief officer responsible to the congregation for the services.

It is important, when a boy applies for admission into a choir, that the choirmaster should interview the parents, for it will be a great help to him if he can feel that he has home influence on his side. At that interview he can emphasize the necessity of the chorister's regular and punctual attendance at practices and services; and if he can enlist the parents' help, gain their support, and get them to take an interest in the boy's duties as a chorister, his work will be considerably lessened and the boy's character usually improved in proportion. It is unfair for parents to think they have no responsibility in this connexion; on the contrary, they must be taught that their share in the boy's vocal education is an important one from all points of view.

Looking at the question all round, it may be said that nine years of age is young enough for a boy to become a chorister. Before that time he is usually not sufficiently robust to stand the hard work of a choir, and although he may give evidence of a pretty voice earlier, he is, as a rule, hampered by not being able to read the words of the Church Service quickly enough to make him of the slightest use.

Good physique is another vital necessity; a puny, undersized boy will seldom bear the strain and should be refused admission to a choir until he has developed to normal Good physique. strength for his age. A weakling will also be subject to colds and unable to attend services and practices in inclement weather, and it will be wiser to persuade...
him to employ his spare time in games and recreation, so as to
give him every chance of better health as he grows up.

Presuming that the boy’s health is satisfactory, and that he
is not suffering from any physical disability, his voice should be
tried; the method of procedure will be discussed in the next
chapter.

CHAPTER II.

TRYING A BOY’S Voice, AND ADMISSION INTO
THE CHOIR.

Let us imagine that an inexperienced young choirmaster has a
row of boys before him to be tried. He will want to know how
to begin—what is to decide him in his choice.

Trying Each boy should be asked to sing the major
the voice. scale of D or Eb quite slowly to the sound
"La," each note of the scale being two beats
in length, as follows:—

1. \( \text{La, La, La, La, etc.} \)

The scale must be sung up and down, and breath taken after
every fourth note—at the commas in the above example. Should
a boy be nervous, he will either use too much breath or not
inhale sufficiently, so it is well to insist that he takes his breath
as suggested. In the case of a raw boy it is wiser for the choirmaster
to sing the scale himself as a guide, always supposing that
he can produce his own voice properly; but great care should
be taken not to give the boy a discordant model. What will
happen when the novice makes his first attempt? He will first,
without doubt, try to force his chest* register up to the highest
note, and give that awful production which we are accustomed
to hear in the street, and which is so much in evidence in badly
trained choirs.

Should this be the case, another boy who has already been
properly trained should be asked to sing a few notes in the
head* register, so as to show the tone that is
required. A rough and uneducated boy will
learn far more from example than precept.

He probably has never heard, and does not understand, what is

* Chest and head voice will be further dealt with in Chapter IV.
meant by "good tone" and "singing softly." If at a second attempt he does not succeed in singing the scale properly, one must not be discouraged. The trained boy already referred to might sing it with him. The practice of making

Two boys singing together is very useful, not only because the inferior singer insensibly imitates the better, but because it helps him to overcome that awkward shyness which is nearly always met with in a boy who is beginning to sing for the first time. He appears to be frightened at the sound of his own voice, and perhaps that is not to be wondered at!

An intelligent boy will quickly realize what is required of him, but if not, let him sing at a practice or two with the other boys, and then try his voice again; he will probably, after this brief experience, show himself capable—or otherwise.

Explain to the new boy that the soft "head" sound is what is wanted, and, in order to get it, ask him to sing quite softly.

Vowel sound "oo."

on the vowel sound "oo" as pronounced in the word "cool." At this pitch, and with this vowel sound softly sung, he will be unable to use the hard chest register and may give a really good head note. If so, impress upon him there and then that this is the quality of tone that will always be required.

2.

When this head tone has been properly established, take him slowly down the scale on the same vowel sound, continuing the head voice as low as possible. The moment he relapses into the chest register, stop, and let him begin again at the top note. Never allow the chest voice a hearing until he is able to use his head voice properly.

Having been satisfied by this trial that the boy possesses a good head voice of fair compass and serviceable quality, we might admit him into the choir. In this connexion Sir George Martin observes that a "young boy with a good head register should be accepted, even though his lower notes are weak."

Before, however, a boy is finally admitted into the choir, there are other considerations which the choirmaster must take into account. If the boy is young, say nine years old, his possibilities must be weighed. A young boy of good promise usually develops very quickly. If he is getting old, say twelve or thirteen, it must be remembered that the time for training him is very short and the enjoyment of the result will be shorter still; also, that any bad habits he may have acquired will be harder to overcome. A younger boy who grows up in a musical atmosphere will, as a
ruin, be of more value as a chorister than an older boy who has not had the advantage of careful teaching and good environment.

A choirmaster should also make a point of asking general questions on various subjects in order to test the boy's intelligence.

Intelligence. A bright boy is often of more use in a choir than one (with possibly a better voice) who is dull and slow. An inattentive, fidgety boy, however gifted, is sometimes more trouble than he is worth. If, on the other hand, his fidgets and inattention are caused by an active brain and superabundant vitality, they can, in most cases, be successfully cured by some definite occupation. More often than not, a boy who possesses a beautiful voice and musical ability is also gifted with very high spirits and a fund of mischief, which may cause embarrassment to his musical instructor. For such temperaments firmness and tact are especially required.

Never be led away by admiration of a fine, loud voice. When singing alone it may sound moderately well; but such loud-toned voices are often most difficult to train into good ways and mingle indifferently with the others to the end. However good in itself, it is not desirable to hear one boy's voice dominating the choir. The effect is always better and more musical when all the voices blend together. One boy with a loud, strident voice has the power of making a pianissimo almost impossible for a whole choir.

A musical ear is most important—indeed essential—and in the trial of a boy's voice the ear test must never, on any consideration, be omitted. A boy with a defective ear, however good his voice, may prove a pernicious influence, doing untold harm to others and to the general effect from this cause alone. For instance, if he sings flat, he brings down the whole choir with him. This kind of boy will always be a drawback and must be shunned.

In addition to the scale work suggested above it would be a good plan to play the notes of a broken chord, thus:—

\[ \begin{align*}
3. & \quad (4) & \quad (4) & \quad (4) & \quad (4) \\
& \quad \uparrow & \quad \uparrow & \quad \uparrow & \quad \uparrow \\
\end{align*} \]

to see if the boy can sing each note quickly after it is struck. Single notes that have no key connexion might also be given as a final test. An example such as the following will suffice:—

\[ \begin{align*}
4. & \quad (4) & \quad (4) & \quad (4) & \quad (4) \\
& \quad \uparrow & \quad \uparrow & \quad \uparrow & \quad \uparrow \\
\end{align*} \]

etc.

He may, in addition, be asked to sing a verse of a hymn with which he is familiar. From this can be judged whether he is likely to maintain the pitch.
When the selected boys have been got together, a beginning can be made in training their voices; and, as proper breathing is the first essential in securing good tone, that subject will be dealt with in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER III.

BREATHING.

Before dealing with the question of breathing, it will be well to preface it by a few words on the chief organs we employ in singing.

Although the choirmaster should know something about these, it is never necessary or desirable, even if he had time to do so, to explain them to the average boy; he need only refer to them in a casual manner when correcting a fault. Boys should be, as far as possible, unconscious of the existence of these organs; but mistakes can often be more easily rectified if the teacher understands what is going on in the body when sound is produced in singing.

To begin with the lungs. These consist of two large pear-shaped organs, each made up of millions of minute air cells, and on their proper use depends the success of our vocal efforts. At the earliest stages in all vocal work, therefore, the proper method of breathing must be carefully taught, for it should be constantly borne in mind that nearly every fault we are called upon to correct is due to improper breathing.

The lungs pump the air through the larynx, that protuberance popularly known as "Adam's apple." This is situated in front of the throat and contains two vocal cords—thick strips of cartilage—which are acted upon by numerous muscles. When these are set in vibration sound ensues.

There are other parts of the body, such as the tongue, lips, teeth, and certain resonating cavities, which are used in the production of sound, and these will be considered in their turn.

Proper breathing is now universally admitted to be a palliative, if not a cure, for many of the ailments which are met with in children, and there is nothing so invigorating and health-giving as singing in pure air.

Breathing and health. Children who are taught to breathe properly will enjoy better health, will offer stouter resistance to disease, and exhibit greater staying power than the average child who has been neglected in this particular.

Some people, however, say: "Why all this trouble about
proper breathing and breathing exercises? Surely it is enough
to breathe naturally, without thinking about it." But it must
be remembered that in the ordinary breathing of daily life, which
is involuntary and automatic, only a portion of our lungs is
used; the air cells in a large part of them are left unexercised,
and, therefore, untried and undeveloped. It is this which
is counteracted and remedied in any proper method of breathing,
as insisted upon in singing. The study of breathing should,
therefore, form an integral part of the work of choir training.

In all breathing exercises it is advisable that breath should be
taken in mostly through the nostrils, for nasal breathing, carefully
practised, will have many beneficial results:

**Breath through the nose.**
- (1) it will warm the air before it reaches the
  lungs; (2) it will filter small impurities which
  might enter the lungs; (3) it will do much to
  prevent the thickening of the nasal passages and to obviate such
  complaints as adenoids and sore throat; (4) it will have a whole-
  some and stimulating effect on the body generally. In **singing,**
  however, breath must, as a rule, be taken in through the mouth,
  as it has to be done quickly and nasal inhalation is rather slow.

Of the various muscles which are called into action in connexion
with breathing, it is only necessary to mention the diaphragm
and the intercostal muscles, which are used for
inflating and deflating the lungs. For vocal
purposes what is most important to acquire is
the power of (1) deep breathing, and (2) perfect
control. In singing, sufficient air must be admitted to the lungs
to last for a considerable time. *Dr. Aikin says: "Under ordinary
circumstances, the breath is taken in easily and then let out quickly,
after which follows a pause; but in speaking and singing, the
reverse is the case, for the breath must be taken in quickly and
put out gradually, and there may be no opportunity for a pause
before another breath has to be taken. It is desirable, therefore,
that a considerable reserve of air should be kept in the lungs,
for much of the volume of the voice as well as the control is lost
when the muscles of the chest are too much relaxed."

Boys should be taught to stand quite naturally and firmly on
both feet, with heels together, and the chest well expanded, but
with no stiffness anywhere. Shuffling or wig-

gling should not be allowed. Breath should be
inhaled slowly and evenly until the lungs are
well filled, remembering that a perfect inhala-
tion is never audible. The teacher must be on the watch against
one of the commonest faults in an anxious or nervous chorister,
viz., the raising of the shoulders and collar-bone. This only crowds

* "The Voice."—W. A. Aikin (Longmans & Co.).
the top part of the lungs inconveniently with air, and consequently makes control most difficult. It will also be noticed that beginners are very apt to take short breaths instead of deep ones; this tendency and the raising of the shoulders must be corrected at once. Breath should be deep and low; the lower ribs expanded outwards on each side to their furthest extent, and kept expanded as long as possible. This is known as lateral breathing and is the best for health, for voice production, and for sustaining power. It is a good plan to direct the pupils to use both hands, placing one on each side of the lower ribs, so as to feel for themselves whether they expand outwards and sideways in the proper manner. "The value of the expansion of the lungs," says Dr. Aikin, "cannot be overestimated from every point of view." "It is well," he adds, "to study respiration in your own body, and to watch and feel carefully the movements which must be cultivated in order to obtain the maximum of breath and control with the minimum of effort."

It is to attain these results that regular breathing exercises are most necessary; but they should not be made too long, as they are apt to tire the boys, especially at first. And, if they are to be rightly valued and carefully worked at, they must be varied and interesting. Nothing is more useless than a breathing exercise shuffled through by a boy who considers it "all rot." The best exercises are those which gradually increase the power of the respiratory organs without any straining. Breath, in the production of the voice, should never be forced. Knowing how to spare and make good use of it will help the singer to bring out all shades of feeling and expression later on. Length of breath is essential in good choir singing, and a boy should always be noticed and commended who does his best in this respect. It is a matter which is too often left to chance, each boy thinking that nobody hears or cares how he breathes. In breathing exercises, therefore, it is important to see that breath is taken in evenly and quietly, until the chest and lower ribs are fully expanded, and for this purpose three or four slow beats should be counted.

The best method of inhalation or breathing-in having been considered, the next and most important point is exhalation or the release of the breath, and this involves the question of control. Breathing out slowly and gently will require great control over the muscles. One must see that not an atom of air is allowed to escape before the desired moment, and it is at this point, when the lungs are quite full, that the pupil's mind must be concentrated on what he is doing, for herein lies the whole difficulty.

When the lungs are partially emptied control becomes much easier,
but it is when they are at their fullest expansion that the teacher must be on the look-out. It requires considerable mental effort to prevent the air from rushing out too quickly at the beginning of the process of exhalation, and the chorister must be watched accordingly.

This complete control in exhalation is not obtained in a minute, but involves much practice and perseverance. It is not natural to us, after filling our lungs, to release the contents slowly; hence the need again of careful and regular exercises.

If the breath is properly economized in emission we shall never get a husky or "breathy" tone. This fault invariably results from letting go more breath than is required to float the sound. A good test of economy of breath is to sing long sustained notes uniformly p or mf, each a whole breath in length, e.g.:

\[ \text{Moderato, } p \text{ and then } mf \]

\[ \text{breath, OO...breath, OO...breath, OO...breath.} \]

This exercise should be confined to the middle notes of the vocal compass at first. The maintenance of the pitch can and should be tested by sounding the notes on the piano or harmonium during each rest. It will generally interest the boys to hear whether the pitch has been kept up or not.

One of the best exercises is to breathe in slowly, and then monotonically to numbers. For instance, take a note, e.g., G—and begin singing the numbers—from one to about nine at first—slowly and evenly on that note, thus:

\[ \text{Breath, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.} \]

\[ \text{breath, one, two, three, four.} \]

As the boy gradually gets control over his lungs the numbers can be increased up to fifteen or sixteen quite easily.

Many choirmasters will, no doubt, assert that they have no time for breathing exercises; and in numerous cases this is quite true. If so, some ingenuity must be exercised in order to include them in some form at the practices. A hymn-tune which the choirmaster wishes to practice can, for instance, be made into a breathing exercise, the boys being told to sing the tune to "Ah," and each line of music to one breath:

\[ \text{Ah...} \]

\[ \text{etc.} \]
CHURCH CHOIR TRAINING

There are many ways of combining the work in hand with some important exercise, and thus no time is lost. When a choirmaster has very limited opportunities for practice with his boys, it is a matter of great difficulty to do all that he would wish in the training of their voices; but if he keeps his attention fixed continually on the breathing in everything that is sung, he will very soon be fully repaid for his trouble by securing good tone, intonation and expression. Let him remember that correct breathing is a fundamental point in singing, and the neglect of it is found to be at the root of most vocal defects.

Careful training in breathing in early years will not only prevent a boy's singing in a slipshod and unscientific manner, but will go far towards laying the foundation of good health in the time to come.

CHAPTER IV.

METHODS OF VOICE PRODUCTION.

We have already referred to the "head" and the "chest" voice; we must now say something on the thorny question of registers, a subject upon which there are many and various opinions. The chief thing to bear in mind for practical purposes is that a break occurs in the voice at a certain point and, therefore, it is convenient to speak of the series of tones above that break as belonging to one register or voice—the "head," and of those below the break as belonging to the other—the "chest" register. These breaks are caused in two ways; (1) by changes in the condition and adjustment of the vocal cords; (2) by the position and alteration of the resonators.*

When boys stiffen the throat in singing, they fix the larynx instead of allowing it to move easily, and consequently have to use undue effort to produce the tone. The result is the shouting voice and raucous tone we hear from newspaper boys in the street. In singing, this is called forcing the chest voice. In using this kind of tone boys deprive themselves of the aid of those resonators which give refined quality, and force out instead a hard and non-resonant, non-expressive tone. With the use of the head register, on the contrary, the voice is so

* These will be explained in Chapter V.
placed that the throat is open, the larynx allowed to move 
freely, and the tone is given the full benefit afforded by the 
mouth and nasal cavities. The sensation is that of lifting the 
high notes against the roof of the mouth.

The question with which the choirmaster will be confronted is 
which method among those in vogue he is to adopt for the proper 
production of the chorister’s voice—handbooks 
do not all agree, and the inexperienced choirmaster at the crucial point of starting his boys 
may well be bewildered. Are we to conclude that all methods 
are equally good in their own way, or is it not rather true that 
different methods will succeed under different conditions? Let 
us consider them in order.

The three chief methods in general use are the following:

(I) To use no chest voice at all, and carry the head register 
right down to the lowest notes which a treble 
will commonly be called upon to sing.

(II) To let the break from head to chest 
voice be a natural one, occurring about

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{III) To use for the middle notes}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a kind of mixed production of head and chest, usually called the}
\text{medium voice.}
\end{align*}
\]

Many weighty arguments are used both for and against each 
of these methods, and good practical illustrations can be given 
of the working of all three. For the opinions expressed in the 
following pages it can, at any rate, be claimed that they are the 
results of long and varied experience.

It has already been explained in Chapter II how Method I 
(the head voice method) can be applied, viz., by selecting a note 
about

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Method I.}
\end{align*}
\]

and asking the chorister to sing it piano on the vowel sound 
“ oo ”; if this does not secure the desired result, and if the boy 
stiffens his throat, it will be advisable to try “ oh, ” or “ e ” as 
pronounced in the word “ egg,” and carry the head tone when 
one secured through the entire compass of his voice, always 
remembering that descending scale practice must be strictly 
adhered to at first. Should the boy find a difficulty, from
nervousness, in pitching the high notes, it is a good plan to tell him to incline his head downwards and so, as it were, get behind the sound.

In carrying out Method I, the teacher will probably be met with the complaint that the lower notes are weak and without ring, notably on a low reciting note or monotonous. In comparison with other methods of production this is undoubtedly the case, though we do not hear the same criticism passed on men’s voices which are also comparatively weak on the lowest notes of their compass. We shall notice this when we come to speak of “ensemble.” But by constant descending scale practice, these weak notes in our boys may be wonderfully developed; and we contend that any feebleness is much to be preferred to the strident street quality into which rough boys are liable to relapse with the use of the chest register. A trial is all that is needed to prove this assertion. If for a time complaints as to weakness of tone are made, the choirmaster must not be discouraged or daunted, but, with strength of mind to uphold him, must persevere until he gets his reward in the increased volume of tone, coupled with purity, which the boys will ultimately give. A good maxim is: “Work for quality, and power will come.”

The very essence of good training is never to extend the lower register upwards, but to strengthen the upper register by careful practice and carry it downwards. The carrying down of a register has in addition this advantage, that it causes no fatigue to the singer.

Untrained and undeveloped voices can hardly sing for ten minutes without fatigue, especially if the chest voice is forced upwards, which at once proves that such production is not the best for sustained singing.

When Method II is adopted—and it is practised with great success on refined material—the chest register should never be taken above.

Method II.

Some authorities advise

as the limit. When boys can have daily practice and attention, the chest voice up to

can be used with good effect, provided they are under experienced supervision; but this method will always require very great
care, and the head voice must in any case be cultivated from

\[ \text{C} \quad \text{B} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{D} \]

upwards. The harsh quality of the whole chest register should be moderated and the break bridged over by careful practice of descending scales, or of the few notes between C and F,

\[ \text{C} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{B} \]

thus:---

until it is hardly perceptible. At the point where the break occurs the difficulty may be overcome and smoothness obtained by the softening of the chest notes and the strengthening of the head notes, so that it will scarcely be noticed when the voice passes from the one to the other. Some choirmasters have brought this blending of the registers to a very fine point of perfection, various phrases being minutely marked off for head and chest voices respectively. This minuteness is all very well when the teacher has the means and time and trained boys at his disposal, but with the usual choir it is not so practicable. Sir George Martin says: "Some boys can never conquer the difficulty of joining the registers of the voice in a smooth and even manner." Take, for instance, the simple and much sung response:—

\[ \text{C} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{E} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{B} \]

how much better it would be to sing the whole of this in the head voice than in the chest voice, or, perhaps, the first note A in the head register and then the F♯ and G♯ in the chest! It is impossible to avoid having two qualities of tone perceptible if the notes are divided up between the two registers.

Another objection to Method II is that it hinders boys from singing, as it were, unconsciously. There should not be too much theorizing with them about registers, but with this method they are bound at every note they sing near the break to be thinking—"Is it in the right register? Am I changing properly from head to chest?" The question of registers is one for the teacher: the pupil will sing better if he is never conscious of them.

It must always be remembered that the introduction of the chest voice is a case of treading on dangerous ground. In a choir school where the boy is under the direct supervision of the teacher the danger is minimized. But when a choirmaster can only bestow very limited time on his training and the tendency of daily life outside the choir is towards the exercise of the chest voice exclusively, it will be the
wisest course to suppress the chest register entirely at first, and adopt Method I. With rough boys, half an hour’s play in the street, accompanied by yells and screams, will undo all the refining work of the practice. Not only so, but the chest voice of such boys may be permanently roughened and spoiled so that it can never be refined to any point worth the labour. Those fortunate choirmasters who cultivate the chest voice, and who do so with good effect, only succeed as they do because they have refined material to work upon. Take, on the other hand, the choirmaster already mentioned who is only able to have two weekly practices with rough boys for his choristers. His only chance of success is to use nothing but the head voice throughout the entire compass, at any rate at first; for this class of boy cannot use his chest voice with anything like refinement, and in forcing the chest register—as he undoubtedly will, not being always under supervision—he may injure the quality of his entire voice.

Besides this, many a disappointment will be in store for the choirmaster who, after great pains and trouble, congratulates himself on having entirely softened down the boys’ chest notes, and on having got quite a good tone at the Friday’s practice. When Sunday’s service comes, and he is helpless to stop and correct, he will find that, generally through inattention and carelessness, the unsympathetic hard chest tone is freely used. With the usual parish church choir one can never be safe from the hard tone of an unrefined chest register, unless a firm rule is made that boys are not to use it at all.

With regard to Method III, the mixed tone which some choirmasters claim to employ, our ears tell us that there is more head voice in it than chest. In any case, it requires quite as much teaching and care as Method II, and it will be difficult to get boys to understand it completely without constant practice.

Method II. Some exceptional choirmasters never trouble about registers at all. Where there is a choir established on proper lines and producing good vocal tone, or where the teacher has exclusively picked boys of an educated class in a choir school, it may not be necessary to do so. But this state of things is, of course, entirely different from that which confronts the choirmaster for whose help this book is written, and can scarcely be taken into account.

The difficulties of a choirmaster will be much lessened when he has once got his senior choristers to produce their voices correctly, because as he admits probationers into the choir they will insensibly imitate the tone quality of the older boys. The power of imitation is very pronounced in boys, and it is therefore all the more necessary to give them a good model for their imitation.
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Looking at the question from all sides, Method I can be unhesitatingly recommended for the choirmaster of the ordinary church, because it is the simplest and easiest for the boys to understand, and will produce the purest tone as well as the best general results. When Method I has been thoroughly taught, and has become second nature to the boys, the introduction of a few chest notes at the lower end of the compass is an easy matter and very often the boys will fall into it naturally. The chest register is certainly more resonant for the following:

\[ \frac{3}{8} \]

and when the head tone has been well established, the use of the chest voice for such low notes can be introduced with telling effect if they are unforced.

If boys in the elementary schools were taught on this method from their earliest years it would immensely lighten the labours of the choirmaster later on. School singing, even National to-day—though there has been an enormous improvement in the last few years, and in some instances splendid results have been obtained under an enthusiastic teacher—is apt to tend to quantity rather than to quality; and a hearty school song that makes the rafters ring and the windows rattle and our throats ache in sympathy, is, in still too many cases, the summit of ambition. Schools in country districts are the greatest sinners in this respect.

CHAPTER V.

VOWEL SOUNDS.

Before we consider vowel sounds it may be as well to say a few words on the subject of pronunciation generally; for to us English people it ought to be a more engrossing study than we usually make it.

Pronunciation as required in singing falls under two heads: Articulation—the work of the consonants; Vocalization—the work of the vowels. Mr. Henry Deacon says: “No nation in the civilized world speaks its language as badly as we do. Familiar conversation is carried on in inarticulate
smudges of sound which are allowed to pass current for something. Not only are we, as a rule, inarticulate, but our tone production is wretched; and when English people begin to study singing, they are astonished to find that they have never learnt to speak... An Italian has but to open his mouth, and, if he has a voice, its passage from the larynx to the outer air is prepared by his language. 'We, on the other hand, have to study hard before we arrive at the Italian's starting point.'

One of the chief difficulties which a teacher of singing has to contend with in England is lazy speaking. People will not move their lips in speaking, still less in singing, unless

**Lazy speaking.** the point is strongly insisted upon. Our facial muscles are stiff from want of use; seldom is it realized what an important part they play in pronunciation, and how essential mobility of jaw and lips is to correct speaking and singing. Such a matter as faults in articulation and pronunciation should not be left to chance; they can be most effectually cured by reading aloud the defective passages before attempting to sing them. A language, let us remember, is in a great measure what a singer makes it.

In order to obtain good quality of tone a careful selection of vowel sounds will be required. Here come in the many difficulties of our language to which reference has been made. It is not English that is at fault, but the way in which it is spoken. We are realizing more and more that a purely pronounced vowel produces a pure musical sound, and when boys are in touch with refined speech from their earliest years the work of a choirmaster is much reduced. Districts and counties make a great difference to his work, and he may have many linguistic foes to contend with, such as "cockneyisms" and provincialisms, but under the influence and the inspiration of a good teacher these will tend to disappear.

A most successful plan is to get a few picked boys to sing the mispronounced words correctly, as a pattern to any offender. Boys, as has been said before, possess such remarkable facilities for learning from one another, that much time can be saved in this way. Unfortunately, after great pains have been expended on the production of a pure tone by means of a pure vowel, the moment the vowel sound is sung in an ordinary word, it will, probably, be badly pronounced, the tone will naturally suffer, and the good work already bestowed will seem to have been in vain. The process then to be adopted is to extract the vowel sound from the word, and practise a short exercise on it, showing the boys how the very same vowel sound must be retained when the consonants, initial and final, are added.
Most people know that there are five vowels—A, E, I, O, U, and that every syllable contains at least one of these; but in singing there are many more vowel sounds than these five, because they are all capable pronounced in of being pronounced in different ways. As different ways, an instance, it is only necessary to mention the varied pronunciation of the letter A in the words "father," "age," and "bat"; and there are many others that might be added.

Before going any further, let us discuss the subject of resonance. We need not go into it very deeply, but it has a place of vital importance in singing and voice production, and therefore must be carefully considered.

Resonance. The question is often asked: "What is resonance?" We may best define it as the strengthening or reinforcing of sound. We can illustrate it by the violin better than in any other way. "Stretch a violin string over two bridges fixed on a solid block of wood, and tune it to A, and then tune the A string of a violin to the same note and compare the force of the two sounds. The one merely moves the air by its own unaided swing which, owing to the thinness of the string, it can only do to a very limited extent, and, consequently, emits but a feeble sound; the other gives forth a full round tone with which the first will not bear comparison. The instrument, by the vibration of its belly, sound-post and back, reinforces the weak tone of the string, and the peculiar quality which secures this end is called resonance." * Now, vocal sound is caused by the passage of air from the lungs through the larynx, setting the vocal cords in motion as it passes. These vocal cords have their analogy in the string mentioned in the quotation. But this is not all; the chest, mouth, nose and palate must play their part in reinforcing the sound; these answer to the sound-post and body of the violin. It will thus be seen that unless these resonating cavities are properly regulated the tone produced must be more or less faulty.

The chief point to remember is that there should be a clear passage, with no obstruction to the tone by throat, tongue or teeth. The mouth must be properly opened and a clear forward tone insisted upon; feeble and inferior tone is often accounted for by bad resonance, and sounds become more or less clear, sonorous or robust, in proportion to the space in which they vibrate. The clear, forward tone just mentioned need not, indeed, must not, involve any strain or exertion. The throat must be

* "Acoustics."—Broadhouse.
18

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kept supple; in fact, if the tone is not produced without visible effort and quite freely, it will be poor in quality.

The reason for calling a particular part of the vocal compass "head" or "chest" is that the resonance or vibration of those particular notes is felt in the head and chest respectively. With boys the head notes are the most important, and, if properly produced, the sensation will be felt in the head just above the nose, thus showing that the proper resonators are doing their work.

Humming, before a note is actually sung, is a good way to secure the right placing of the voice. For example, in order to pitch, say

\[ \text{m - oo . .} \]

in the head voice, let the boy sing "moo," prolonging the "m" thus: "m—oo." Then, used before any vowel sound, will also have the desired result.

The best vowel sounds for resonance are the following: "a" pronounced "ah" as in father; "e" as in peg; "i" as in tin; and to these can be added "oo" as in boot; "o" as in foe; "aw" as in jaw; "e" as in on.

Vowel sounds for resonance. It is wise to limit the vowel sounds to the above until some advance has been made, and it must never be forgotten that the formation of vowel sounds is chiefly the work of the lips, and that the column of air in the mouth must be kept in the same direction for them all. This will be clearly felt if the above vowel sounds are sung in succession. As a matter of fact, singing is only a question of using the lip and facial muscles to give distinct utterance to words. This is very easy to say or write, but it requires long practice to perform. Let us take as an illustration the first line of Hymn 514, A. & M.:

\[ \text{Fa - ther of all to Thee.} \]

\[ \text{Ah - o - aw - oo - oo.} \]

The eliminating of all consonants leaves the vowel sounds as the only means of impressing on the mind of the boy his faults of pronunciation. When they are sung to him as a pattern, and the difference shown vocally between good and bad vowel sounds, he will be dull indeed and possess very little ear, if he cannot tell which is good and which is bad. A boy with a defective musical ear will sometimes require a good deal
of training before he perceives that there is a difference. This ought to be a rare case; but such dullards must not only be asked to listen to the difference of tone the teacher produces, distinguishing between good and bad, but they must also be able to produce it for themselves. If they really grasp that there is a difference, it will be noticed at once, and, unless they do, it is not much good going on any further.

It will be remembered that the employment of the vowel sound "oo"—the equivalent of the Italian "u"—was advocated in trying a boy's voice, for the reason that it brings the voice forward. In practising, however, this vowel sound must be used in moderation, or in the course of the Church Service a variety of Amen often heard and phonetically describable as "oo-mon" will be the painful result. This "oo," be it understood, is only a means to an end, and not the end itself; and when, by its use, the voice is properly placed, the "oo" sound should be almost discarded. It seems that it is used by some choirmasters to the exclusion of all other sounds. They think that, having achieved a forward tone with "oo," they need go no further. In this way, every word is "oo-ed" to death, and a boy's pronunciation made positively ridiculous. We have even heard the following: "Woo besooch thoo to hoor oos good Lood," etc. It is important to impress upon those who teach on this plan, the fact that the vowel sound "ah," with a good forward tone, is the end to aim at. But how are we to obtain the proper production of "ah"? In order to arrive at it from "oo" which, as has been said, is recommended for placing the voice at first, a good exercise is the following:—

Begin a sustained sound on "oo" with the mouth moderately open and the teeth apart; (this necessitates a forward movement of the lips, which slightly increases the resonant capacity of the mouth); the column of air being kept in the same position. Then let the lips only move to sing "oh," proceeding in the same way to "aw," and finally to "ah." For the latter sound the lips must be inclined towards a smile.

As the tendency of English voices is to send the vowel sound "ah" back into the throat, the greatest care will be necessary to ensure that the tone is kept in the same position as in singing "oo," viz., in the front of the mouth, and only an easy and very slight movement of the lips made for the change of the vowel sound. When a boy can sing "ah" with the proper head quality on any note and without the help of the previous "oo," the teacher may congratulate himself that he is over the bridge with the proper production of the boy's voice.
The late Mr. Alberto Rangedger, a high authority on such matters, said: "When, after some practice, the voice gets accustomed to ring in the front of the mouth, the "oo" should be gradually changed into other vowels, taking care, while doing so, that the column of air continues without interruption, and that the stream of sound preserves the same direction towards the front of the mouth, thus:

20. \( \text{oo} \quad \text{ah} \quad \text{a} \)

Assuming that the boys have now thoroughly grasped the production of the head voice with the vowel sound "ah," properly placed, the sounds "ai" and "ei" can be added, and be practised on all the notes of the scale, thus:

21. \( \text{oo} \quad \text{oh} \quad \text{ah} \quad \text{ai} \quad \text{ee} \), (breath), \( \text{oo} \quad \text{oh} \quad \text{ah} \quad \text{ai} \quad \text{ee} \), etc.

Very few exercises are better than "doh, ray, me," etc., according to the Movable Doh system. Such exercises will have four important results: (1) They will teach the boy to sing any vowel on any note; (2) encourage lip movement (so often neglected); (3) help him to read music; (4) give him an idea of the place of each note he sings, in the diatonic scale. The choirmaster must not be satisfied with "dow" for "doh," "faw" for "fa," but be careful to get all vowels pure and distinct, remembering always that the lips only are to move for the change of vowel, the throat remaining open throughout.

The advantage already referred to of picking out the mispronounced vowel in a word, cannot be overestimated, if only as a saving of time in the end; but one must first find out and diagnose what is wrong and then give an exercise on the vowel sound required.

In all teaching it is essential to remember that it is a gradual process, and the choirmaster must be content to deal with one thing at a time and not confuse the brain of the boy with several difficulties at the same moment.* Much patience is required, and this virtue must be cultivated by the young choirmaster, who is possibly apt to be too keen to get quick results. At this point in his training the chorister will need to concentrate his mind on vowel sounds alone; and when he has mastered

* See Chapter XV.
some of them, the adding of consonants ought not to be a matter of great difficulty.

It has already been said that our language is spoken differently in different parts of England, and we have, therefore, to suit our methods to our material. A well-known difficulty with boys who live in or near London is in the pronunciation of the vowel "i." For example, the word "bright" is usually pronounced as "brought." We must, in that case, first pronounce the word correctly, and then imitate his accent, and get him to hear the difference between his pronunciation and what it ought to be. An exercise could be invented to overcome the difficulty, such as the following:

```
22. \( \text{\textcopyright \text{G} \text{\#} \text{\#} \text{G} \text{\#} \text{G}} \) \text{a - ee, a - ee, a - ee.}
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the whole word afterwards being used:

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23. \( \text{\textcopyright \text{G} \text{\#} \text{\#} \text{G} \text{\#} \text{G}} \) \text{Bright, bright, bright.}
```

Tackling the difficulty in this way is a good means of securing a correct pronunciation.

Exercises may be given on other words which present special difficulties, e.g., the words pray, say, may, etc., where the "a" is so often transposed into "i." In this case you must try the "e" sound, as in "prey," and so on. Scores of instances could be adduced, but the choirmaster of the ordinary church will have his hands sufficiently full if he can make use of the various vowel sounds already mentioned. He will need to study the provincialisms that are native to his particular district, and endeavour to overcome them by special exercises. Whatever exercises he uses for the purpose, it is essential that they should be practised softly, and sung easily and without stiffness.

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CHAPTER VI.

CONSONANTS.

Consonants are seldom made enough of, and are rarely properly finished. Exaggeration on this point can hardly exist. At the further end of a large building, even over-emphasized speech in singing sounds merely normal; and when words are clipped or not thoroughly finished they are perfectly indistinguishable. The
musical effect in choral singing often depends upon the clear and vigorous enunciation of the words. Hardly any consonant is capable of being overdone, excepting perhaps "a." "All we like sheep"; "Spare us, good Lord"; here the sibilant sound is so penetrating, and it is so literally true that in this matter "a little goes a long way," that in discussing pronunciation it is necessary to draw special attention to it.

Vowel sounds occupy the greater part of any word in singing, and they should be dwelt upon as long as possible. Let the following diagram represent the length of a word: roughly speaking, the time occupied by the vowel sound would be the space between the wavy lines, and that of the initial and final consonants the points before and after them. This will show not only how essential it is to get a good vowel sound, but also that, however well the vowel sound may be produced, the words will be very indistinct if the consonants do not get their due share of attention.

The consonants must be short and sharp, but very distinct and clear. Let us take a familiar example, the National Anthem:—

If we hear this correctly sung, we shall notice that the consonants occupy very little time, but that those at the beginning of each word must be given with a definite sharp attack by the aid of tongue, teeth and lips, and that the finals—d, ve, r, s, ng—must be well finished before the next word is attempted. The final consonant will always require special emphasis and clearness, particularly if the building is large.

Although it is essential that the initial consonant of a word or syllable should always be pronounced quickly, and with secure attack, the final consonant is the one that usually causes the greatest trouble, owing chiefly to lazy lip movement. In piano singing particularly, the attack of the initial consonant, as well as the clean-cut quitting of the final one, must be watched for and insisted upon if the words are to be audible and intelligible, and not smudgy and indistinct, as they too often are. All choristers will need impressing with the fact that more lip movement is necessary for clearly defined words in soft than in loud singing.

The most common faults to be guarded against are the following:—

(1) The running of one word into another, the result of slovenly lip movement; e.g., the words "made to" becoming "may' to"; "sartily" being made to do duty for "us heartily," in "Let us heartily rejoice," etc.
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(2) The tacking-on of the last letter of a word to the beginning of the next; how often one hears the response: "Incline our hearts to keep thi—slaw."

(3) Allowing a letter which both ends one word and begins the next, do duty for both; e.g.: "Let not them that trust in Thee" often sounds: "Let no' them that' trus' tin Thee," etc.

(4) The elision of little words; a very familiar instance is in the "Gloria Patri," "Glory be to — Father," etc., "As it was in — beginning," etc.

(5) Voices failing to quit the final consonant at the same moment. For instance: "Spare us, good Lord-d-d"; "and with Thy Spirit-t-t." This is due usually to carelessness and slackness. The different voices of a choir must complete the words together, clearly and promptly, thereby avoiding the "end-as-you-please" sort of finish.

(6) The allowing of the lips to fall out of position before the full value of the note is reached, so that the final consonant is not clear, short and sharp. For instance:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hear my prayer.}
\end{align*}
\]

should be sung, as nearly as an example on paper can show, as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hear my prayer.}
\end{align*}
\]

(7) The elision of the "g" in words ending in "ing"; "Beginnin'" for "beginning," etc., should never be tolerated. The word

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{He.}
\end{align*}
\]

often causes some difficulty to boys, and is frequently pronounced "he-ul." This needs constant correction, and the following example will be found a help in doing so—make the vowel sound long, and the "Il" quite short, thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hi. Il.}
\end{align*}
\]

and pronounce the "Il" with the tip of the tongue at the front of the mouth.

The consonants should always be practised by the choirmaster himself while he notices the effect of the tip of the tongue, the
palate, the upper and lower teeth, and the lips. He will learn more from this than in any other way, and will be able to give his own illustrations to his choir. (This advice about practising on oneself applies also to breathing exercises, etc.)

Dr. Aikin in his treatise, "The Voice," describes the manner in which the principal consonants are produced. The common aspirate 'h' is due to the rushing of the breath through the larynx. The hard explosive 'k' and 'g' and the nasal 'ng' are made by constricting between the base of the tongue and the palate. The explosive 't' and 'd,' and the nasal 'n,' the liquid 'l,' and the rolling 'r' are formed between the tip of the tongue and the palate (or roof of the mouth) in front. The explosives 'p,' 'b,' and the nasal 'm,' are formed by the lips; 'f' and 'v' between the lower lip and the upper teeth. 'Th' is formed between the tip of the tongue and the upper teeth; 's' and 'z' between the teeth; and these also with the help of the lips are the aspirates 'sh' and 'ch.'

It will be seen from this quotation how much depends upon the tongue and lips for the articulation of the consonants.

In many instances the lips are not closed quickly enough—for example, in the word "man." In order to get a good initial "m," the lips must be quickly but lightly closed, and be succeeded by a very short humming sound. This word furnishes an additional example for a final consonant, for the "n" should be clearly articulated, and this must be done by raising the tongue to the roof of the mouth. Experience teaches that some consonants will require more attention than others: "p" as in the word "lip," and the final "d" are too often left to take care of themselves; the word "Lord" for instance usually being pronounced "Lor." With the "t" or "r" at the end of a word, the choir will need constant reminders, e.g., in the words "slight" and "fear." If occurring at the beginning or end of a word or syllable, the "r" should be rolled; but not if the word or syllable is followed immediately by another consonant. The rolling of the "r" in the word "Lord" must be very slight, as if not it becomes a word of two syllables; "Lor-ed." In the word "mercy" it is made to sound ridiculous when sung, as one sometimes hears it, as if it were spelt "merces-

It is pleasing in singing to hear such words as "what" and "when" pronounced with the "h" aspirated, but this must not be overdone.

The mispronouncing of words in a mincing and affected style (e.g., the word "spee-rect" for "spirit," too often heard) is most objectionable; indeed, all affectation in speaking or singing is to be studiously avoided. Choirmen are much to blame for imitating the affectations and bad habits of professional singers. Mr. Plunket Greene speaks very forcibly on this subject, and a
short quotation from his book* will add much weight to what has already been said: "All the singer's gifts, all his perfection of technique, all his observance of rules, go for little or nothing if his singing is not speech in song. But of too many English singers it may be said that in their desire to sing they have forgotten to speak. 'Amen,' 'Hawly,' 'Saw-url,' are the accepted pronunciation of Amen, Holy, and Soul. There is a tendency to shade at the smallest provocation all vowels to the open quality, sacrificing thereby not only the charm of variety but the fascination of such pure, deeply expressive closed vowels as the 'ee' in meet, the 'o' in sworn, or the 'u' in pure." He then gives a list of what he calls the hybrid pronunciation of Anglo-Saxon singers:

Man = maun Dog = dawg
Swan = sworn And = arnd
Cat = cart, etc.

Many choirmasters, in order to secure a good tone on a word that is not easy to pronounce, sacrifice the pronunciation. If, as has been said before, all vowels have been well practised separately, there will be no need to mangle a word for the sake of the tone. Each vowel sound, well produced, has its own particular timbre and charm. It must be admitted, however, that a good round tone is easier to produce on some vowel sounds than on others, particularly on high notes; "meek" or "sleep," for example, on would be difficult. Modification of the vowel sounds, however, need not be very marked.

Bad pronunciation too, especially of the vowels, often interferes with the resonance of the voice. It is a fatal mistake to neglect good enunciation; nothing carries the tone of a voice further, or makes such a world of difference to the pleasure of the auditor.

CHAPTER VII.
OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH A BOY'S TRAINING.

In considering the attitude or posture to be adopted in singing, the choirmaster must first of all insist not only on the mouth being well open, but also on the teeth being kept well apart. As a good test, make the boys put their thumb-joint sideways between their front teeth. It may be a useful and not unnecessary

* "Interpretation in Song."—Macmillan & Co.
direction to ask the boys to "stand at ease." For it is a curious fact that the moment a boy, or an adult for that matter, is asked to sing, he will put himself into a stiff and unnatural attitude; whereas one of the chief secrets of good singing is to avoid all tension of the muscles and to be perfectly easy and unrestrained; the lower jaw, especially, being quite elastic, never rigid, nor allowed on any account to protrude. With boys a tight, pinched quality of tone, especially on high notes, always means that the throat muscles are screwed up instead of being natural and loose. In addition, the heels should be placed together, the chest slightly expanded, the head held not too high, while the arms should hang loosely.

It is the greatest mistake to raise the chin in singing; it only tightens the muscles of the throat, and is liable to produce "throatiness." No undue strain either should be placed on the larynx, but it should be kept perfectly free and have a slight, easy movement up and down. Let the boy hold the larynx with his forefinger and thumb and sing "oo" or "ah":—

\[ \text{\textbf{30.}} \]

\[ \text{oo or ah.} \]

when the larynx will be felt to ascend. Then let him sing the octave below:—

\[ \text{\textbf{31.}} \]

\[ \text{oo or ah.} \]

and he will notice that the larynx in that case descends. These up and down movements of the larynx are very important in securing an easy production, and we ought to be careful to avoid any action that will interfere with its free and supple movement.

A point often overlooked by choirmasters is the position of the tongue. Boys are apt to raise or curl it, instead of letting it lie flat so that it may not interfere with the outlet of sound. The fleshy, non-resonant tongue, if raised, forms as it were a barrier or ridge, obstructing the free passage of the air from the throat, and diminishing the resonant capacity of the mouth. Naturally the tone suffers, and instead of a pure resonant quality the boy will produce a woolly, muffled sound. In cases of bad production it is well to ascertain if the tongue is raised, as in many instances this will prove to be the cause. When the tongue is forward and lies flat in the mouth, the tip of it should just touch the lower teeth.

Another neglected point is the cultivation of a pleasant facial
expression when singing. Boys and adults so often put on an
unnatural look the moment they are called
Facial expression. upon to sing, almost as though it were the
occasion of some acute physical discomfort:
this is not attractive, and should be checked.
The easy, natural attitude described above, coupled with a
bright expression of face, will go a longer way towards securing
good tone than may be supposed.
The real compass of an ordinary boy's voice is from

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{22. } \\text{ to } \text{33. } \\
& \text{ or } \text{33. }
\end{align*}
\]

but it should not be imagined for a moment that an untrained
boy will be able to sing all these notes, or even be aware of
possessing them. Probably his own idea of the limit of his
compass will be the highest note to which he can screw up his
chest register. Boys are often ignorant that they can sing with
any other, and their surprise and delight when they discover
their own head notes are amusing and interesting to witness.
Sir George Martin says: "It is a common error to suppose
that boys' voices are lower in compass than those of women
who sing the same part. Exceptional cases will occasionally be
met with, but, as a rule, almost all trained boys can reach

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{34. } \\
& \text{in chorus, and even } \text{35. }
\end{align*}
\]

is not an impossible note for them."
In practising, it is advisable to leave the extreme notes quite
alone at first; begin on a fairly high note, say

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{36. }
\end{align*}
\]

well within the head register, and work gradually downwards.
Attention should be chiefly directed to the middle of the voice,
and by developing these notes the extremes will also be strength-
ened. If any high passage must be practised it should be done
lightly and gently and always mp. Never tire the voice by over-
practice of a high-pitched passage. It is often a help to boys in
securing a high note to let them drop the chin slightly.
It ought not to be necessary to emphasize the importance of
the daily practice of scales; where this is impossible a few minutes
should be given to them before each rehearsal

Major scales. as a preliminary "tuning up." They are most
useful as exercises in breathing, equality of
tone and intonation, alike for beginners and the more advanced
boys. The major scales must be taught first, and, as already
recommended, should be practised downwards, for the sake of getting the right production. For it is almost impossible for boys to begin on a high note unless they use the head voice, which is what is wanted; and having begun with the right tone they will, in all probability, continue with that production; whereas if they begin with a forced chest tone, on a low note, each succeeding note may get worse and worse in an ascending scale. Upward scales are more difficult to sing smoothly and tempt the boy to more waste of breath. The moment, however, that the boy is safe with his head production, there is every reason why scales should be practised upwards as well as downwards.

As a variation they should also be practised crescendo in going up, and diminuendo in descending, and vice versa:

The best vowel sound to use is “ah”; but if its use produces any tendency to throw the voice back into the throat, it is good to use “oo,” or any of the other vowel sounds already recommended, until this fault is cured. “Koo” is sometimes employed, but the hard consonant “k” is apt to cause a slight compression of the throat, the very end we are anxious to avoid. Scales sung to “nah” or “muh,” either legato or staccato, will be found useful varieties, the “m” or “n” having the effect of focussing the voice forward.

If an accompaniment is used for scales, the choirmaster should be content with playing simple and straightforward chords. He can start the boys off with a scale ascending Accompaniment, and descending, and test the pitch of the finish by striking the key-note; but on no account should he play each note as the boys sing it, unless to pull them up when out of tune. Unaccompanied scale singing is by far the best practice, for in this way the boy is kept attentive and his mind alert. For the training of his ear, too, the slighter the accompaniment the better.

As the boy advances he should be introduced to the minor scale. This is not sufficiently advocated or practised. He should begin by singing the major form of a key, Minor and chromatic scales, and then sing the minor forms (harmonic and melodic) from the same key-note.
The minor scales are harder to sing than the major. In the harmonic form the awkward interval of the augmented second will need care and be good practice; and in the melodic form the fact of ascending by one series of steps and descending by another will stimulate the boy's intelligence; while the singing of both forms in perfect tune makes an excellent ear test. The pace can be increased at the choirmaster's discretion. The practice of chromatic scales can be added with the more advanced boys, and the succession of semi-tones will give them something to occupy their minds, e.g.:

\[ \text{\textbf{40. }} \]

To get a chromatic scale in good tune requires some concentration in directing the voice, and if it is practised even occasionally, awkward chromatic intervals in modern music will be robbed of much of their terror. All these scales should be varied by practising them with different forms of expression.

The singing of arpeggios of both major and minor chords, such as:

\[ \text{\textbf{41. }} \]

Arpeggios. is one of the best tests of vocalization and, as a rule, is much neglected in church choirs.

They should be sung twice over, the first time an even forte, the second time an even piano, or vice versa. A natural tendency is to make a crescendo, and to hurry in singing up to the top note; but the chief object of arpeggios is to obtain an even quality of tone and pace throughout. An easy legato should be insisted upon, the notes well joined, but not slurred together. This is hard to achieve. To vary the treatment, "doh, ray, me," etc., according to the Movable Doh system, might be sung legato and staccato to both scales and arpeggios, instead of "la" or "ah." They should also be transposed to different keys. All these exercises will be found most useful, and indeed, indispensable for obtaining flexibility of voice. In addition to the common chord of the key the following will be found good:

\[ \text{\textbf{42. }} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{43. }} \]
One other reason why the practice of arpeggios is invaluable is, that it enables the choirmaster to impress on the boys’ minds the different intervals of which they consist. He can explain, for instance, how the common chord consists of the third, fifth, and octave, etc.

Without going beyond the limits of the weekly work of the choir, plenty of new material can be found if desired. The ambitious choirmaster will find first-rate practice in such set pieces as “Let the bright seraphim,” “For unto us a Child is born” (Messiah); but before attempting the performance of such difficult music let him be certain that his simple services are well done.

Where time and opportunity are limited it will not be possible to practise all these exercises (scales, arpeggios, etc.) on any one occasion, but a selection should certainly be gone through, and it will be found that the variation will keep up the boys’ interest in their work and make their minds alert.

The choirmaster must use his own judgment in making an interesting and well-varied selection from practice to practice, remembering what Sir John Stainer said in speaking on this subject: “These studies are intended not so much to lead up to difficulties as to take the pupil over and above them, so that he shall descend or let himself down to what, under other circumstances, would prove insurmountable obstacles.”

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH A BOY’S TRAINING—continued.

We now come to the question of teaching the rudiments of music to choirboys, and we shall almost certainly be met with the objection from the choirmaster of the ordinary church, that it is impossible to include such instruction in his two practices a week; a few scales and arpeggios, such as were recommended in the last chapter, are, he assures us, the utmost that he can attempt when there is new music to prepare for the Sunday services. The reply to this is, that it is of the greatest importance that boys, however rough, should know something of the subject they have in hand, and not sing like parrots, in total ignorance. At each practice it will take very little time to explain to them such things as the values of notes and rests; the meaning of the signs $\sharp$, $\flat$, $\natural$ (the tie or bind),
and a few Italian expression marks; indeed, all these can be
learned through the medium of the music
studied. The teaching of time signatures will
take a little longer, but with method it need
not be a great worry. Show the boys some
chart like the following:—

| 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 16 | 32 |

explaning with the names of the notes how many of each are
contained in a whole note or semibreve. Where time is limited
this might constitute the first lesson. Having made sure that
this knowledge is fully grasped, it is then only necessary to
explain that when, in the example chosen, any one of these
figures—2, 4, 8, 16, 32—is seen as the bottom number of the time
signature, it means that there are a certain number of those
notes in the bar—if ¼, crotchets; 8, quavers; 16, semiquavers,
and so on—the upper number in the time signature indicating
how many. Thus the meaning of ¼ (3 crotchets in the bar),
¾ (6 quavers in the bar), etc., can be distinguished at a glance.
All boys learn far harder things than this at school every day.
There is no intrinsic difficulty in the subject, and the teaching
of it can be done by degrees in the course of learning the church
music. Later on it will be a simple matter, even for the hard-
pressed choirmaster, to teach the meaning of simple duple,
triple, and quadruple times, and their respective compounds.

This information is very necessary, but it must be remembered
that the chief object in learning about time is to understand,
observe, and feel where the chief accents
Chief object in
learning about
time.

Chief object in
learning about
time. Strict time cannot be said
to exist without due cognizance of this fact.
For instance, ½ time must by the youngest boy
be known and treated as compound duple
time, with two accents in a bar, on the first and fourth quavera.
When this has been understood and acted upon, how different
the result will be from the slipshod, timeless, singing so often
heard, with no accent to speak of, and no swing.
The power of keeping strict time is much rarer than that of
singing in tune and, therefore, should receive more cultivation
than falls to its lot, as a rule. The old custom
Separate parts
for each voice. his own separate part, without being able to
see or refer to other voice parts, made it
a necessity for the singer to count his time carefully. Bars
marked:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15496;
were a familiar sight in church music. Nowadays, with the cheaper complete copies, the chorister can see by a glance at the other voice parts where he has to come in, without troubling himself to count his own bars of rests. As far as keeping time is concerned, this is no gain. The chorister gets out of the habit of counting his time, and depends on the other voices for his entry: the other voices not being by any means infallible, this is not always a safe method.

Strict time generally suffers considerably in soft passages, for one of the commonest errors is to assume that soft is synonymous with slow. This is such a general tendency with all vocalists that it needs constant watching and correction. One of the most beautiful choral effects is pianissimo singing in strict time, but how seldom is it heard! In many churches the absurdly slow pace at which some responses are taken often compels the choir to take breaths in a wrong place. The familiar example: “And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us,” with a mistaken idea of reverence, is usually drawled out to such a length that breathing after the word “Holy” is inevitable, though of course quite wrong. Excessive slowness does not add to the impressiveness of the words, and very often results in the response being ragged and out of tune.

Indefinite time marks, such as pauses and rolls., are most difficult to contend with without a conductor. If a pause is to be successful, there must be some definite understanding established as to its length. A good plan is to add one, two, or even three beats to the given value of the note, as only in this way can the teacher ensure that the choristers will all leave off together.* The number of beats allotted to a pause should be determined by the accent, whether weak or strong, required by the note following it.

As rallentando means gradually slower it is more difficult still to get anything like unanimity amongst the voices. Wherever possible it is well to adopt in its place “ritenuto,” which means slower at once. The constant introduction of rallentandos in a service is a common but very serious blot. Choirmasters of experience will know that with certain members of their choir rallentando seems to be almost a part of the constitution, with the consequence that strict time is always in jeopardy. Rallentando should be sparingly employed, and poco rallentando is usually quite enough for most passages marked rall.

Time also suffers from choirs not giving notes their full value.

* See the Author’s “Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services,” page 21.
and on this point they need constant reminders. How often we find with a tied note, or a series of tied notes, Full value of notes at the end of a phrase, that before the last one is reached all vocal sound has died away.

The last beat of a syncopated note is more often than not clipped short, and consequently upsets the balance of a phrase. This fault is sometimes due to want of proper economy of breath or breath control. Such notes as breves, dotted semi-breves, etc., need special notice in church music. The two common faults of hurrying and dragging are such familiar foes to every choirmaster that they hardly need mention. Boys will nearly always rush up to high notes. A notable example is in Handel’s Messiah:

![Muziek noten](image)

And the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the Lord.

In their anxiety to reach the top note they will get faster and faster. It is a bad habit, and throws out the swing and steadiness of the time. When boys sing out of time, or hurry, or do not hold notes their full value, one of the best remedies is to make them sing numbers to each beat instead of the words. For instance, the well-known hymn, “Lead, Kindly Light,” which is nearly always sung out of time, can be set right by this method:

![Muziek noten](image)

Sing—And 3 and 1 and 2 and 3 and 1, 2, 3.

1, 2, 3, 1, 2, and 3 and etc.

It must be taken for granted that everyone knows something about accents, the first beat in 4 time being strong and the third weak. This does not present much difficulty as a rule, but 6 time—two accents in a bar—does not seem to find favour with a church choir. Boys fail sometimes to take up the unaccented notes, usually the third and sixth quavers in a bar; if that is found to be the case, making them sing to numbers instead of the words (as just mentioned) is often a cure. The well-known Anthem by Spohr presents this difficulty, and needs careful rehearsing if steady time is to be secured. The two accents in each bar must never
be lost sight of; the moment these become uncertain the effect is untidy and the parts will never go together with anything like swing or precision.

Now, as to rhythm: "The term rhythm is one that it is extremely difficult to define exactly or accurately; it involves so much, and can be applied in so many directions, that to confine its meaning within the four walls of a verbal definition is an almost hopeless task. This difficulty is increased by certain misconceptions of the exact nature of rhythm, which have resulted in many popular misapplications of the term. It is, for instance, frequently confused with time, and one hears such expressions as rhythm, quadruple rhythm, and so on: or it is no less often regarded as indicating merely the particular way in which notes are arranged between the successive strong pulses. Rhythm, although it necessarily includes the factors of pulse, accent and time, goes further than any of these, and demands for its expression and realization the idea of a movement or an impulse towards definite points of climax, or of repose, where that movement is itself broken or arrested—producing thereby the idea of 'phrase.'"*

Time, accent and rhythm are so important and so closely related, that without attention to them music can hardly be said to exist, and slipshod renderings are due to their neglect more than to anything else. But where the choirmaster insists on strict attention being paid to them, the effect is not only at once perceptible, but the music receives an entirely new significance.

Should the choirmaster find it particularly difficult to get his choir to understand the swing of a piece or to realize the periodic recurrence of an accent, an exercise on one note sung to "la," giving the proper emphasis, will often have the desired effect.

The following is a sample:

50. \[\text{La, la, etc.}\]

The subject that seems to follow naturally at this point is that of attack. Strict time and attack are so interdependent that the one leads us inevitably to speak of the other.

**Attack.**

How refreshing it is to hear a good attack on a note or chord, made without hesitation and over-accentuation!

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*Stewart Macpherson's "Form in Music;" Chapter III.—Joseph Williams, Limited.*
Boys are usually thinking about an attack when they ought to be making it. Precision of attack is about the weakest point with most choirs, and learning to be entirely independent of the help of the accompanying instrument is a great corrective. Breath taken too late is another cause of a weak attack, and a gasp usually ensues instead of the note. When no rest is given in the music and breath is required, it must always be taken at the expense of the last note of the previous phrase, never by sacrificing the note that is coming, e.g.:

\[51\]
\[
\text{Christ the Lord is risen a - gain, (breath) Christ hath}
\]
\[
\text{Bad.}
\]
\[52\]
\[
\text{Christ the Lord is risen a - gain, Christ hath}
\]

Attack is not confined to the first note or chord in a piece of choral music; unanimity in securing this is essential, but music is made up of a number of phrases, and the attack of each phrase requires mental concentration and breath regulation. The notes also of which the phrase is composed will often be smudged owing to the lack of a definite attack. The late Mr. Rendegger's instructions are as follows: "Hold back the breath for an instant, mentally aim at the pitch of the note before singing it, and then attack the sound gently, giving to the column of air the slight impulse necessary to the action of the vocal organs for the production of a soft and pure quality of tone."

In a change of chant how ragged and undecided the attack usually is! A verse is sometimes gone before one can hear what the new chant is. The fault here lies in not being prepared for the change beforehand. The choirmaster will do well to insist at rehearsal that the change from one chant to another shall be practised several times. Every chorister should be prepared in his mind with the first note of the new chant at the last verse sung to the former one. Nor should there be any perceptible pause between the first chord of the chant as played on the organ and its being taken up by the voices. They should be trained to be on the alert before the organ chord is sounded, and ready to take it up the moment it is heard.

The only way to secure from a choir a good attack is never to pass over a bad one.

The worst attack is, as a rule, made in piano singing. It has
been said before that *piano* singing from its very nature requires more definiteness than *forte* singing. But one can be perfectly clear without being loud.

**Attack and piano singing.** These remarks apply to the *words* and to the notes with equal force. Choirmasters whose one idea is tone, and tone alone, often forget that not only the note but the initial consonant requires some slight accentuation; also that the clear and precise articulation of the initial consonant is a great help in ensuring a satisfactory attack. The well-known rule, "Do not open your mouth when the note should begin, but *before*," is seldom borne in mind.

Anticipating the note, gliding or swooping (as it is sometimes called) up to it or from it, must not be tolerated for a moment in choral singing. Such an effect as

![Musical notation](image)

is very bad. In church music *portamento* is quite out of place, and it should be avoided even in solos.

*Portamento* and *legato* are often confounded by the ignorant, but in reality true *legato* is quite distinct from *portamento*, and the latter should seldom be employed by vocalists who have any true feeling for ecclesiastical music.

While thus directing his efforts to obtaining a clean and precise attack, the choirmaster must not forget to insist also on the different voices quitting the sound promptly and simultaneously, leaving no "ragged ends."

Before closing this chapter something must be said on reading at sight. Good sight-reading is an invaluable attainment, and attention should be given to this important matter at every choir practice. New chants and hymns can always be taken as a sight-reading exercise, singing the notes to "*la*" or to the sol-fa syllables. The boy can then concentrate his attention entirely on the notes, and his mind will not be diverted by trying to grapple with strange words and music at the same time.

For the choirmaster who has to teach the subject from the beginning and has not much time, we will now suggest a rough and ready method.

When boys have sung scales they can easily be taught to apply their knowledge of tones and semitones, of which a scale is
composed, to sight reading. The choirmaster can add to this the chord of the tonic, which will give the interval of the major 3rd, perfect 5th, and octave:

```
55. \( \begin{array}{c}
\text{\(G\)}
\text{\(B\)}
\text{\(D\)}
\text{\(E\)}
\end{array} \)
```

Exercises can then be given in simple time comprising all the intervals found in the scale and major chord. During the practice of such exercises the choirmaster must make sure that all the intervals have made their mental impression on the boys; without this precaution sight-reading will be mere guesswork, whereas his aim must be to secure certainty, as far as possible. The key should be constantly changed. This amount of work—the scales and tonic chord—will keep him occupied for some considerable time. He can then go on further and add the second inversion of a common chord beginning on the key-note:

```
56. \( \begin{array}{c}
\text{\(E\)}
\text{\(B\)}
\text{\(E\)}
\text{\(G\)}
\end{array} \)
```

From this chord the boys will learn the intervals of a perfect 4th and major 6th. If the choirmaster has been able to impress upon the boys' minds all the intervals mentioned, he will have done well. He can then try such exercises as the following:

```
57. \( \begin{array}{c}
\text{\(A\)}
\text{\(F\)}
\text{\(B\)}
\text{\(E\)}
\text{\(C\)}
\text{\(B\)}
\text{\(E\)}
\text{\(G\)}
\end{array} \)
```

\( \text{Ah... ah... etc.} \)

Space will not admit of going deeper into this subject*; but even with the amount of knowledge gained up to this point, the boy ought to be able to tackle with confidence a chant or hymntune or any straightforward diatonic music. Let it be repeated and emphasized, that all kinds of exercises, sight-reading included, should be taken in hand before the united choir practice begins. Hours of time can be saved in this way, and then exercises will become interesting and instructive, instead of being a mere mechanical performance. Sight-reading is not learnt all in a moment, and "slow and sure" is the best motto. The intelligent teaching of sight-singing, if only for ten minutes once a week, especially to the younger boys or probationers, will be of great benefit to the choirmaster in lightening the labour of teaching new music, and so leave much more time for finesse and expression. As a rule boys are very keen, and if they can once be interested in a subject they will soon learn enough of

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* For further help the choirmaster is referred to "The Class-Singing Teacher, by F. C. Field Hyde (Joseph Williams, Limited), to the Manuals of the Incorporated Staff Sight-singing College, or to those of the Tonic Sol-fa College, where he will find the subject comprehensively treated."
it to put it to some practical use. As we have already pointed out, learning to sing at sight also sharpens the wits, and a good sight-reader is generally found to be quick and good at other things; so the time given to the study of it will be time well spent from every point of view.

Dr. Lyttelton says:—"There is incontrovertible evidence from those who have had experience that an intellectual advance is noticeable as soon as the children use their brains in interpreting symbols on the blackboard." This is not to be wondered at when we consider that the only satisfactory basis of all sight-reading must be close mental concentration.

CHAPTER IX.

INTONATION AND EXPRESSION.

Before we proceed further we must devote a few moments to a subject which has been the trial of choirmasters for generations, namely, bad intonation. One of the chief causes of this failing is a defective ear, and that is why we were so emphatic on the necessity of refusing admission into the choir to a boy whose ear was unsatisfactory. Any boy who sings out of tune without knowing it must be considered hopeless for our purpose. Undoubtedly there are cases of a defective ear being much improved, but if a choirmaster has been so taken by a good voice as to admit a boy into the choir with an imperfect ear, he must be prepared to find that he has let himself in for a good deal of extra trouble.

A defective ear is not, however, the only cause of singing out of tune. Many other conditions may be at the root of it:

1. A bad atmosphere;

2. When the voice is overworked;

3. When the boy is badly fed or delicate;

4. Slovenliness, i.e., singing with the mouth half shut and breath half taken;

5. When the boy is physically or mentally tired.

But the two principal causes, as a general rule, are:

(a) Laziness, or being mentally asleep. This can be proved over and over again; for when a passage has been sung out of tune and the choirmaster has expressed himself strongly on the subject, it is very often sung perfectly at a second attempt, because the boys have given their minds to it. Some authorities declare that out of every hundred cases of faulty intonation, ninety-nine are mental in their origin and are due to inattention.

(b) Forcing the chest voice up beyond its proper limit. This
will be found to be the cause of the trouble in many badly trained choirs. This is easy to understand when we remember the amount of physical effort required to keep the chest voice up, compared with the ease with which the head voice can be brought down. There is no more distressing sight or sound than that of boys purple in the face, getting hoarser and harsher every moment, while they struggle to sustain at their proper pitch, with the chest voice, notes which should be sung in the head register.

Monotoning is one of the best cures for flat singing; and by whatever method a boy’s voice is trained, it is always advisable to monotone in the head voice; the tone is sweetened and softened and, physical effort being reduced to a minimum, the pitch will be more easily maintained.

The usual notes for monotoning are:

58. \[ \text{\includegraphics{image}} \]

which occur at the most awkward point, since it is here that those teachers who use both head and chest registers make the break, and if the chest voice is used there will always be an effort to keep up the pitch. It is only necessary to try the experiment of monotoning on

59. \[ \text{\includegraphics{image}} \]

with the head and chest voices to be convinced that the head voice is the more advisable.

The words in monotoning should be taken at a decided, measured pace, with precision, but not a mechanical precision. Each word should be uttered by all the voices at the same moment, with the proper emphasis, as in good reading, giving due consideration to the brevity of certain syllables. The slipshod method of pronouncing words anyhow, without any regard to ensemble, though common enough, is both irreverent and inartistic. It is just as important to monotone in time, that is, at some uniform pace (which certainly does not mean that every syllable is of uniform length), with due regard to punctuation, emphasis and simultaneous breathing by all the choir, as it is to sing a set piece of music in the same manner.

In many churches the General Confession is now said in the natural speaking voice; but in the case of the Lord’s Prayer, for example, a good general rule is that the clergyman should start monotoning alone and the choir join in after the first words: “Our Father.” These words, “Our Father,” will be repeated by the choir and then all should continue the prayer
together. Unless there is some understanding of this kind the effect is ragged and unsatisfactory.

At the end of a monotonous passage, in order to ensure a simultaneous *Amen*, it is a good plan to have a definite number of beats assigned to the last syllable of the last word of the prayer; these should be carefully rehearsed so as to be understood and observed by the whole choir. This is surely better than for all the parts to wait for the signal from some deep bass voice, or, worse still, from a man alto, the choir then taking up the note as they choose, generally by no means with one consent. For instance: "But deliver us from evil... *Amen*," in the Lord's Prayer; the last syllable of "evil" might be held for two beats, then there will be no doubt as to all the voices taking up the *Amen* together:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{But deliver us from evil} \\
\text{*Amen*.}
\end{array}
\]

Here let it be observed that a drawn-out *Amen* of indefinite length is a mistake. Two beats of moderate length on each syllable will be quite enough, all the choir closing their lips at the same moment.

Whether in monotonizing or in singing generally, we should never be deluded into forcing the voice in the hope of increasing its strength. A good head-note, sung without effort, will carry quite as far, and the tone produced will be equally enjoyed by the listener, whether he is close to the singer or at the end of the building. Apart from straining to produce power, there is a good deal of unconscious voice forcing that has to be guarded against in choral singing. It is of interest to hear Mr. Henry Deacon's views on this point: "It is well known that a voice in unison with several others becomes almost entirely neutralized, as far as the possessor's consciousness is concerned. The singer's voice goes to swell the volume of sound, but cannot be heard by its owner, and the result is an amount of perhaps unintentional forcing that leaves him vocally exhausted at the end of the chorus. Those whose existence depends upon their voice will not allow their enthusiasm to carry them beyond their powers, as those do who join a chorus for the love of the thing."

Forcing the voice will almost invariably lead to sharp singing and rough tone, and it will destroy all chance of flexibility.

The flexibility of a voice is one of its greatest charms, and to have injured it by straining or forcing is a disaster. But flexibility can only be obtained by careful control of the breath, a loose throat and lower jaw and supple larynx, which will enable the vocal muscles to have free action. As the muscles gain in flexibility,
the extreme notes of the compass will develop themselves naturally, without any forcing; and with the head voice rapid passages can be sung clearly and flexibly without tiring the voice in any way. No florid passages could be executed with anything like a pure legato, unless the voice were flexible; and, of course, all ornaments without it would be difficult and inelastic. But let it be noted that flexibility never means, as some appear to think, that one note may run into another; every note should be clear, crisp, and distinct. Florid passages, such as those in Handel’s choruses, can be executed by boys with the utmost precision and clearness when they produce their voices properly, economizing their breath and keeping all the vocal muscles in a natural, easy and supple condition. All kinds of rapid scales, arpeggios, and triplet passages are good practice for gaining flexibility. For instance:

In entering upon the wide subject of expression, it may be instructive to quote further observations by Mr. H. Deacon on this important matter. "What are we to understand by this much abused word?" he asks. "A generally accepted meaning is a series of aimless, ill-proportioned crescendos and diminuendos, rallentandos and accelerandos, with a constant apparent disposition to cry. Expression, if only from its etymology, means a manifestation of the thought and feeling passing within." With choirboys, any "thought and feeling passing within" is extremely rare. It may be occasionally one’s pleasant lot to train a boy who has real feeling, who is responsive, quick and sympathetic; but even with all these lovely qualities he will be unable to portray them, unless he has the proper tone
production at his command. How uncommon is this musical boy in any case! As a rule we must face the fact that any expression in a boy's singing will have to come indirectly from the choirmaster, the boy being only the medium.

Without breath control graduated expression is an impossibility. As little breath as possible should be used in producing a note and the boys should learn to store their breath, using no more than is necessary for the particular sound that is required. The exercise known as "messa di voce" consists, as the late Mr. Randegger puts it, "in commencing a sound as softly as possible, gradually swelling it to its utmost power, and as gradually diminishing it to the degree of softness with which it began. This requires a complete command over the respiratory and vocal organs, and is a finishing study, and not an elementary one, as is so often supposed."

| Ah | ah | etc. |

All shades of expression from p to f, can be secured far more easily with the use of the head voice than with that of the inflexible chest register. Untrained boys do not understand what soft singing is, but until that is acquired, a satisfactory forte cannot be attained: it will be nothing but a shout.

Good loud singing should be only a development of soft, therefore it follows that, unless they can sing piano, they cannot sing forte properly. When training boys to sing piano, it will be an enormous gain if they can be made to concentrate their minds not so much on the tone as on the breath, using as little as possible at first, and only releasing more by degrees, as it is required.

Exaggeration in expression is certainly an evil of the day. Any sensationalism or overdone pictorial effects are surely out of place in church. Expression marks must be attended to carefully and minutely, but any excess should be immediately checked in the cause of music, dignity and reverence.

A patent fact often forgotten is that the expression mark "crescendo" implies beginning softly. A choir singing at the top of their voices have no power of crescendo whatever—one cannot make a crescendo on a ff! Again, if an effective accent (ff) is required, an mp should follow immediately, in order that the full effect of the accent may be felt.

In all expression the meaning and mood of the words should
CHURCH CHOIR TRAINING

be the chief consideration, more especially when no expression marks are used. It is a wise plan in teaching,

**Meaning of the words.** to draw out the views of the boys on the meaning of the words they are singing, and ask them if they think they are joyful or sad, triumphant or solemn, etc. Such questions appeal to their minds and make them take a more lively and intelligent interest in their vocal work. This will help them also to enter into the service in a proper spirit and give a rendering which will not only be perfect musically, as far as their powers go, but may produce a deep impression on those who hear it.

A defect which the choirmaster will often have to combat, especially in adults, is the introduction on every note of a paralysis of tone known as the **tremolo.** These singers deceive themselves by imagining that feeling cannot be adequately expressed in music without some fearful vocal wobbling. It is a very common trick. On this point we must again quote Mr. H. Deacon: he tells us how "a vocal vice sprang into existence, namely, a departure from the steadily sustained note. It took two forms, the *vibrato* and the *tremolo.* . . . Both are legitimate means of expression in dramatic music when used sparingly, in the proper time and place, but when constantly heard are intolerable. They are abominable mannerisms, expressing nothing at all but direful want of control over the feelings." . . . The tremolo is sometimes used with the view of making the voice carry, but if it does this, it does it at the expense of intonation. With others, it is simply an exaggeration, supposed to be 'intense.'" These words, from one of the finest voice-trainers ever known in England, need no emphasising.

This unsteadiness of tone, if indulged in largely and continuously, becomes most distressing to listen to, and boys should never be allowed to give way to this habit, especially in singing church music. If it is used to hide a defective note one can admire it as a piece of craft, and under those circumstances it may be excused; but if a choirman prides himself on it as a good effect, it will require all the tact and management of the choirmaster to stamp out this "vocal vice."

One of the saddest moments that a choirmaster has to face is the breaking of a boy's voice. The close of the lads's singing career as a soprano is one of the many trials which the teacher has to contend with, especially when perhaps more than one leading boy's voice goes at the same time. It is a disheartening fact; but it is unwise for him to pretend ignorance or disregard the symptoms of the coming change. The general consensus of opinion is that a boy should not sing at all at this
time of muscular relaxation, though cases can be cited of good
tenors and basses who have sung without intermission from the
time they were boys. A boy's voice is generally at its very best
and fullest just before it breaks; and one of the
Signs of breaking.
first signs of its breaking is a huskiness in the
middle notes and general unsteadiness of tone
and intonation. The upper notes very often
remain full and powerful for some little time longer, though this
is not always the case; but the lower notes are difficult to sing.
A choirmaster may very well imagine, at this depressing
moment, that all the care and labour he has expended on the
boy's vocal training are thrown away. This
All training in vain?
is natural and excusable; but he must not
forget that the musical cultivation and taste
which the boy is just beginning to show are
possessions for the rest of his life. Although his voice has left
him for a time, his love of music and the good of it remain;
and the knowledge derived from his vocal training will stand
him in good stead when his adult voice is formed. What sort of
voice this will be, whether good or bad, tenor or bass, all experts
have failed to foretell; but it is happily not very common for
a choirboy to be entirely without voice later. Even if he does
not shine as a soloist, he will generally be able to join a choir or
choral society and carry on his musical studies in part-singing.
All medical authorities seem to be agreed that rest is highly
desirable at the period of the break of the voice. There is
a congestion of the vocal organs at this time,
and rest is practically imperative. On this
Opinion of medical authorities.
point the late Mr. Randegger observes: "When
a youth is approaching manhood the voice
undergoes a very great and sometimes even
a total change, for it is not infrequent that a boy having had
a soprano voice becomes in manhood a bass or baritone, while
another who possessed a contralto voice is transformed into
tenor. It is most important to exercise great judgment in
training children's voices for singing, never allowing them to
strain their delicate vocal organs, and in every case suspending
altogether the practice of singing during the critical time of
change from childhood to adolescence."

It often happens that this "resting time" is very bad for the
boy and gives him time to form bad habits and to get out of
Resting time encourages bad habits.
hand. No effort should be spared to keep in
touch with him, as later on he may develop
into a very valuable vocalist. In any case,
for the boy's own sake, he should be looked
after at this time. We would, however, add
one word of warning, necessary not only for choirmasters, but
for all who are interested in the boy; when his voice is gone, he
considers himself beyond being treated as a boy, and as he is
very sensitive on this point, let the choirmaster be careful to
show him some of the little attentions which adults receive.

CHAPTER X.

BALANCE—ENSEMBLE—MEN'S VOICES.

Before speaking of the balance of voices required for a well-
proportioned choir, it will be well to see how the sopranos should
be divided, supposing that the boys had to sing
in two parts, as is sometimes the case where
there are no men. It is not necessary to have
the same number for each part, but if the voices
are good, the proportion, roughly speaking,
should be that of twelve firsts to eight seconds.*

Boys sometimes experience great difficulty in sustaining the
second treble part; it should, of course, be perfectly learnt;
but, in spite of this, they are apt to relapse into the first treble
part. That being the case, the second trebles must be strength-
ened, so that their ears will not be so much distracted by the upper
melody. Should this device not have the desired effect, another
plan is to soften the first trebles, even to the extent of making
them hum, so that their singing will be scarcely heard; then as
the second trebles become sure and more independent, the first
trebles may be added to, or increase their tone, and so arrive at
the normal proportion.

In speaking of the balance of men's and boys' voices, we must
assume (what will not always be the case) that all the voices are
of average power, neither exceptionally good nor miserably poor.
In this case the number of men's voices sometimes advocated is
out of all reasonable proportion to the boys'. An overpowering
number of men will not only destroy the balance, but will induce
the keen boys to shout and force their voices, thus making matters
infinitely worse.

Let us take the usual choir of twenty-four boys—twelve boys
on the "decani" and twelve on the "cantoria" side. For this
number six men on each side, two basses, two
tenors, and two altos, if they have anything
of boys in choir. Like good voices, should be ample to secure a
proper balance of parts. We must, however,
remember that in every choir there is always a tail of junior boys
whose strength of voice does not count for much, but whose

* The number of seconds may even be slightly less.
time of value is coming. If these were up to the level of the leading boys, and the men were poor vocally, then an extra man or two might be required.

It is constantly found, especially in voluntary choirs, that there is hardly a genuine bass voice amongst all the so-called basses, the majority being ordinary baritones. No real basses. who never possess that deep, full bass quality which is such a fine foundation for good choral tone. Whether the genuine bass can be obtained or not, it is essential always to secure an adequate bass part, for it is the rock upon which all the other voices seem to rest; and a good supply of basses will have a most telling effect. Balance of voices is a subject on which no hard and fast rule can be laid down, because there are so many circumstances, different in almost every case, to be taken into account; but it is a matter requiring careful thought, especially when we come to consider our next point, ensemble.

A safe rule for all singers, whether men or boys, is: “Never sing so loud that you cannot hear the voice next to you. If you cannot hear him, you may be sure that you are contributing more than your proper share to the volume of sound.” Another point of which nearly every choirman needs to be reminded, is to listen critically to the sound of his own voice as compared with his neighbour’s, so as to be sure that he is producing the right tone for blending with the rest. To listen to Self-criticism. one’s own tone is an art that requires much practice. Choir enthusiasts often allow their feelings to carry them away, to the great detriment of the general effect. On being asked: “Did you hear how loud you were singing in such and such a passage?” the singer will in most cases answer “No,” showing thereby that he was more intent on his own efforts than on any idea of ensemble. On this head Mr. H. Deacon neatly observes: “A great difficulty in the way of study is to hear oneself as one really is, and not as one intends to be. We are so much under the dominion of our minds, that it is very hard to avoid accepting our intentions for our performances.” This listening to oneself, or self-critical faculty, can and should be cultivated, being essential to success in choral singing.

In order to secure proper blending of tone, it is, without doubt, essential that all the boys should produce their voices on some uniform method. Voices that are produced in a haphazard way, without any particular system, will never blend properly. If some boys sing with the chest voice, while others use the head, the hard chest register will stand out above the
flute-like quality of the head voice, and the two will never blend.

But if all the boys are trained on one good

Blending method exclusively—that of head production—
voices with it will be found that the sum of their voices,
ladies' voices. whether singing piano or forte, will resemble
one big voice; and an additional advantage,
not to be underrated, is that they will blend with ladies' voices
indistinguishably, adding brilliancy without standing out con-
spicuously.

It is a well-known but curious fact that many excellent voices
which are quite satisfactory as soloists never blend properly with
others, but are always prominent in a choir,

Good voices of however piano they may sing. To the artistic
peculiar timbre. ear, whose chief delight is a perfect ensemble,
this will entirely spoil what might otherwise
be a real pleasure. It may and often does arise from a radical
peculiarity of timbre upon which no training is of any avail.
Much oftener, however, the cause is bad production, which can
and must be remedied if the singer is to be a pleasant ingredient
in the choir.

One of the most satisfactory features of good choral singing
is for the hearer to be, as it were, conscious only of the pure
harmony of the chord, without being made

Pure harmony aware of the individuality of any of the
of the chord. voices which compose it. Of course, this is
an ideal not often realized, but it is, none the
less, one to be aimed at. It is a fact that will not commend
itself to your conceited vocalist, but, nevertheless, one that
should be maintained and urged, that all individuality in part-
singing must be suppressed.

Reference has been made to the fact that all voices are weakest
on the lower notes of their compass, and that
this weakness is not confined to the trebles only.

Low notes In the second part of the well-known chant,
weaker in Crotch in C, it will be found that
all voices.

in the treble, not being a very powerful note, will be hardly
heard if the basses and tenors are allowed full vent on their
upper C and E, which are very strong notes in their voices:—
These must be moderated to secure proper balance of tone, and to avoid what we have just objected to, namely, undue prominence of any part. Another well-known instance is the beginning of the Chant in D, by Woodward:

\[ \text{Music staff image} \]

In the second chord all the basses and tenors are singing the D, and, if this note is allowed to be forced, nothing else will be audible. In the same way the lowest notes of the tenor part will often need watching if they are not to be drowned by the basses. In writing vocal music for S.A.T.B. more regard should be paid to the strong and weak notes in the different voices. In this way the ensemble would be helped and the music prove much more effective. The bass is, of course, the heaviest voice, and the alto part is generally the weakest; on that account the best arrangement in the choir stalls is as follows: altos nearest the congregation, then tenors, and, last of all, basses. The leading boys and those with good voices who are most dependable should sit immediately in front of the altos.

We now come to our next point, the treatment of men’s voices, and will begin with the man-alto, or counter-tenor. His history will be found briefly described by Mr. John Hullah in the following interesting extract:

“The falsetto counter-tenor, or, more properly, counter-alto, still to be found in cathedral choirs, dates, if musical history is to be read in music, from the Restoration of Charles II, who, doubtless, desired to reproduce at home, approximately at least, a class of voice he had been accustomed to hear in continental chapels, royal and ducal.” Mr. Rockstro’s account of and comments upon the boy-alto and counter-alto are also well worth reproducing. He says: “In Germany, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, boys were taught, as now, to sing both soprano and contralto parts with equal success. In England a different plan was adopted. After the Great Rebellion, the difficulty of obtaining choirboys was so great, that treble parts were either summarily dispensed with, or played as a *pis aller* upon cornets.* Adult voices were, however, more easily obtainable, and adult singers learnt to execute alto, and even low treble parts, in falsetto. Thus arose the cultivation of the peculiar form of voice now called the

*Not the modern “cornet-à-pistons”!*
counter-tenor—an unnatural register which still holds its ground in English cathedrals with a pertinacity which leads to the lamentable neglect, if not the absolute exclusion, of one of the most beautiful voices in existence—the true boy-alto. This sweeping change in the constitution of our cathedral choirs naturally led to a change of corresponding magnitude in the character of the music written for them. In the verse anthems of Humphrey, Wise, Blow, Purcell, and other masters of the school of the Restoration, the falsetto part, under its title of counter-tenor, holds a very important position indeed; and still more important is the rôle accorded to it by Croft and other writers of a later generation. . . . In Germany the falsetto voice has always been held in very low estimation indeed. Spohr, on his first visit to this country, expressed the greatest dislike to our English counter-tenors.” Mr. Rockstro’s admiration for the boy-alto will, perhaps, scarcely be shared by most choirmasters. There have, certainly, been instances of boys possessing really beautiful contralto voices; but, as a rule, the boy-alto, as found in the ordinary church choir, is not remarkable. He will be either a treble on the point of breaking, who has lost his top notes, or one who has never been distinguished for a good treble compass.

Of this material, because it is not of much use in the treble, the alto part is commonly made up. In any case, whether he has a good voice or not, the boy-alto will be obliged to use his chest register, certainly for the majority of the notes he will sing. If he does this, he will need careful watching to prevent coarseness of quality; and, as we have already seen, the chest register of boys is not the best for mixing with other voices.

The vexed question of man-alto versus boy-alto is one which, in small places or remote districts, generally settles itself by the impossibility of getting a good counter-tenor.

Boy-alto v. man-alto. Where the latter can be had, even if he be only moderately good, many choirmasters will prefer his services to those of the boy-alto.

For in the first place it is difficult and takes up valuable time to teach the average boy an alto part; and in the second place a greater number of altos will be required, that is, about half the number of trebles. Therefore, unless boys are plentiful in the district, the treble part will be robbed and suffer. One may add to these objections a third, namely, that few choirmasters will have the time at their disposal necessary for the extra teaching involved. Of course, when the counter-tenor is unattainable, the boy-alto is the only alternative, and, with careful training, he can be made a tolerable success. His voice, however, does not last many years.
The compass of the counter-tenor is from

while the boy-alto, if he were trained as we advise, would be able, without difficulty, to give a good note on this C, as well as good notes above it; but the lowest notes of the compass would not, as a rule, be very useful. The extra compass upwards of the boy-alto is of the utmost service in most modern music, notably in choruses from Mendelssohn’s Oratorios and works by Brahms, etc.; but the counter-tenor will be the more effective of the two in English cathedral music which, as we have seen, was specially written with his voice in view.

In spite of all that has been said in favour of boy-altos, if the choirmaster is able to get men-altos, we advise him to do so; he will want fewer of them than boy-altos, and, if they can sing moderately well, they impart brightness of a peculiarly sweet timbre to the harmony. The counter-tenor has his faults, however, and they must not be overlooked, especially that comical, hooting tone in the production of some notes which borders on the ridiculous.

Good counter-tenor preferable.

Faults of counter-tenor. It is rather difficult to get a counter-tenor who has a sweet and mellow voice; but, looking at the question all round, if he possesses anything like an agreeable tone he is to be preferred to the boy-alto for English church music.

The vocal training of the adult members of a choir is nearly always neglected; and it is a matter of some difficulty to secure this training, as vanity seems to be inseparable from inferior singers. But it may be possible that enthusiastic choirmen, especially volunteers, would not object to paying a small fee and forming a class to improve their knowledge of music in general, and, in particular, to learn to produce their voices better and to read at sight. The state of things here suggested may seem to some too ideal; but it is certain that by thus qualifying themselves better for their work, the choirmen would immensely relieve the choirmaster and lighten his labours at rehearsal. Apart from private tuition, which they cannot always afford, this is the only way in which the “throaty tenor” and “bawling bass” can be effectually dealt with; and by this means they would soon be taught not to force their upper notes in church, and thus, quite unintentionally, spoil the ensemble of the music.

In this matter of improving, we will not say training, his
choirmen, the choirmaster will find it an incalculable advantage

if he can illustrate his teaching by his own

Choirmaster voice. His salary is not likely to admit of

as a singer. expensive singing lessons, and he must at all

costs avoid unqualified teachers, as there is

still a vast amount of quackery in connexion with the teaching

of singing; he will learn a good deal more from a well-written

treatise on the subject. But if he is unable to afford proper

lessons, his next best plan will be to attend a good cathedral

service whenever possible, and hear the thing as it ought to be
done. It will greatly strengthen his position when insisting on

sweetness and purity of tone, for instance, if he can demonstrate

how they are to be attained. It must not be imagined from this

that he is expected to have a fine voice, for

Not necessary this is a gift only bestowed on the few; and

to have a at any teacher's examination to which he may

fine voice. submit himself, he would never be called upon

to do more than show an understanding of

good tone, production, and vocal methods, which can be done

with only a small amount of voice. Some of our best teachers

of singing have no voices to speak of, and yet they can give all

that is necessary as illustrations to their pupils.

Some suggestions must now be made about men's voices

other than the alto, and we will begin with the tenor.

The usual compass of the tenor voice is from

Tenor voice. 69. \( \text{G clef} \) to \( \text{E clef} \) or 70. \( \text{G clef} \) to \( \text{B clef} \)

The average tenor is usually a difficult person to manage and

his opinion of his own powers is generally very great. In singing

his upper

71. \( \text{G clef} \) or \( \text{C clef} \)

he considers himself in all his glory, and spares neither his voice

nor other people's ears in his endeavour to drown almost any

other sound which ought to be heard at the same time. If these

notes were properly produced—they might be studied in the

suggested class—tone and perhaps tune would be much improved.

Flat singing is a vice to which this voice is very prone, and it

is well known that a flat tenor singer will drag the whole choir
down with him. Bad intonation is usually attributed to the

boys, but it is by no means just to accuse them alone. Adults

are quite as often sinners in this respect.

The following notes

72. \( \text{G clef} \) or \( \text{C clef} \)

* All examples in the G clef are, of course, sung an octave lower
will be quite high enough for him to sing with what is known as
the "open tone"; if carried above B♭ it will
generally be forced and "shouty," certainly
not of a blending character. On E and above,
the tenor should be taught to use the "closed
tone," and the best way to secure this is to practise him on the
same method as that recommended for the boy in securing his
head voice, viz.: the use of "oo-oh-aw-ah," of course keeping the
position of the "ah" quite forward. Throaty
tenors are, unfortunately, very common, and
should the choirmaster be fortunate enough to
form an adult class such as was suggested, he will find this fail-
ing most difficult to get rid of, especially if the habit has been
of long standing. It will require all his tact, as well as all his
knowledge, to cure the unpleasant production caused by a tight,
closed throat.

His first step will be to see that the larynx is kept low; if
allowed to rise and disappear into the throat it is certain to
cause that choked or throttled tone which we
want to cure. This quality always makes its
appearance the moment a tenor throws his
chin forward, and when he indulges in this
habit it is certain that both his voice and the choral har-
mony will suffer. If tenors are not really such, but in truth
light baritones—and these form the majority of the so-called
tenors—they naturally find the high notes difficult to reach.
A light baritone likes to think that he is a real tenor, and he
excuses the heaviness of the quality of his voice by saying that
he is a tenore robusto! If these tenor-baritones find the high
notes rather beyond their compass, it is the greatest mistake
to allow them to force their voices and shout, which they are
certain to do if not corrected. Ask them to sing the notes by
themselves softly; this they will, no doubt, find it impossible to
do, and then the choirmaster has his chance to suggest that they
should be taken in falsetto. This is much to be preferred to
seeing the singer get red in the face, straining after notes which
cannot be reached or produced without undue exertion.

The usual compass of the bass voice is from

\[ \text{C} \quad \text{to} \quad \text{C}^{\prime} \]

It is a voice that is naturally of rather a hard quality and not
very flexible, but powerful and capable of
sustaining sounds. Its hardness and want of
flexibility are caused by the thick muscular
structure of the vocal cords, and therefore in its cultivation
great care must be taken to produce the sounds lightly and
easily, at the same time preserving the roundness. The same remarks about the "open" and "closed" tone in the tenor voice apply to the bass, but in the case of the bass he ought to begin to close about | |

and get the forward production on this note and on those above it. If the vowels mentioned for the tenor do not give the desired result, practice on the vowel "e" as in "me" will be found useful. An open | |

has sometimes a good effect, but the bass should make a general habit of singing it with the closed tone, as he will be more often required to do so in ordinary cases.

A good, round, deep bass voice in a choir is a real treasure. It gives a rich effect to the harmony that can be secured in no other way. The benefit of this bass quality will

**Bass quality.** be felt throughout the entire service, imparting fullness to the tone, from the simplest *Amen* to the big bold unison passage in the Anthem.

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**CHAPTER XI.**

**PSALMS AND RESPONSES.**

Before we proceed to consider the subject of chanting, a few words on the Psalter itself will not be out of place; and for this we cannot do better than quote the following extract from "Readings on the Psalms addressed to Choristers," by the Rev. H. Housman: "The Psalter is a collection of the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, known by the general name of the Psalms of David. The Psalms are divided into five distinct books, the close of each division being marked by a solemn doxology, followed by a single or double *Amen*. The Psalms were not collected together and arranged in these five books all at once. Before the Psalter arrived at the English version, it passed through two main stages—the Greek and the Latin. The very first part of the Bible which was translated into the native tongue of England was the Psalter, and it was introduced in its original state into the first English Prayer Book, A.D. 1549, and it has been retained unaltered in every succeeding edition of the Book of Common Prayer. As years went on, the belief strengthened that the English Psalter had given rise to a new school of chanting; and that, as Gregorian music had been the vehicle of Latin devotion, so for the future must the Anglican
be that of English. Founded by such composers as Tallis, Farrant and Byrd, the Anglican school took root in a manner so decided as to prove how suitable it was to the soil."

With these introductory words we come now to the important subject of chanting. And here the force of what has already been said as to pronunciation will be felt more than in any other part of the service. Chanting should, of course, be as much as possible like good speaking—each word well pronounced and not hurried. There must be no unnatural accents or pauses, all should be flexible and smooth throughout. In a word—

**Good reading.** Chanting should be considered as a combination of free speech and song;* and it will always be a saving of time in the end if the choirmaster insists on any difficult verse being read aloud beforehand. The singing of the Psalms is much the hardest part of the service, and often goes the least well. It requires an immense amount of careful practice, more than is usually given to it, and is quite a test of a good choir. Sir John Stainer says that "the form of the chant has been the real cause of the difficulties of pointing. An ordinary melodic sentence consists of two, four, or eight bars, but the chant has three, and then four bars. This peculiarity does not, however, offend the ear so much as the eye."

Each section of the Anglican Chant for the purpose of pointing is divided into a "reciting" portion and a "metrical" portion. Let us take as an example a well-known single chant:

![Music notation image]

The bars in the music will correspond thus to the bars used for the words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recitation</th>
<th>Metrical portion</th>
<th>Recitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us heartily re-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joyce in the strength of our sal- vation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Author's "Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services," Chapter V.
The "reciting" portion of the chant extends as far as the word "us" in "O come, let us"; then the measured time begins at the word "sing," the words following being divided into bars to correspond with the bars of the chant. The latter half of the chant is arranged in a similar manner.

In summing up the difficulties of chanting, the Cathedral Paragraph Psalter puts the matter very well in the Preface. It observes: "The two main difficulties consist, first, in securing the deliberate and audible enunciation of the words which go to the recitation note; and, secondly, in connecting smoothly the free recitation with the rhythmic part of the chant."

There are many ways of dividing up the semibreve at the beginning of the melody of the chant, as follows:

\[ \text{38. } \text{d} d; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d}; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} ; \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \text{d} \]

**The Cathedral Paragraph Psalter gives an illustration of each of these divisions on page 8 of the Preface; but beyond alluding to the book for those who like to investigate the matter, they need not be described in detail. The method of dividing up the semibreve by actual notes written over the words is a great help to the choirmaster of the ordinary church, and it enables all the voices to point in the same manner.**

The simple and old-fashioned method of teaching chanting to an ignorant choir, who probably understand nothing of the subject and have never heard it well done, is the following:

**Method of learning chanting.**

Select the rhythmic portion of the chant first, and sing it in strict time, according to the notes. The choirmaster need not practise the whole verse, but begin at the accented word or point where the melody may be said to begin, and count two beats in a bar. (Refer to Example 76.)

When this has been thoroughly mastered by the choir, he can proceed in the same way throughout the psalm, each side taking up the note promptly.* When unanimity has been secured, his attention can then be given to the recitation. Here the very sound advice in the Cathedral Paragraph Psalter may be quoted: "In order to obviate all need of hurry in recitation, and indeed to prevent it if possible, the words which go to the recitation note have

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* Very special care must be taken in order to prevent this method from degenerating into a mechanical "jog-trot" performance.
been divided by means of asterisks into phrases which can reasonably be taken in one breath. At the asterisk, wherever it occurs, a slight break should be made. Punctuation should not be observed in a slavish, stilted, pedantic fashion, but as an intelligent reader would observe it, letting the observance be perceptible by the audience, but not obtruding it upon their notice."

Acting upon these valuable suggestions, nothing can be better, if it is found that the recitation is badly sung, than to make the boys read it several times with good articulation, punctuation and proper emphasis. This practice in any case will do much good, and help to render the chanting more intelligent.

Evenness of pace is, of course, a great desideratum, but it is quite wrong to give equal value to each syllable. It is not natural to do this, and in reading would be very bad.

Incorrect to give equal value to all syllables.

It is artificial and mechanical, and does not tend to clearness of comprehension; and, moreover, there is a flavour of the "patter song" about such recitation which is quite inappropriate in church. The right method is that the natural, slight emphasis on certain important words or syllables should be observed as in good reading. Slight emphasis must not, however, be confused with an accent, which would produce a jerky and uneven effect and is never to be recommended. Starting with the axiom that the words of the "recitation" must be clear and never hurried, a golden rule for finding the proper pace is that it should never exceed what is required for correctly articulating and finishing every syllable.

Having now practised the choir in the clear enunciation of the "recitation," some difficulty will be experienced in joining this smoothly and evenly to the rhythmical part of the chant. Where the join takes place, a slight accent on the word or syllable cannot be avoided, but a common fault is to over-accentsuate this word; the slightest stress is enough, and the musical position of the word will give it the necessary emphasis. Where it is unduly prominent, it seems to be made a kind of rallying point, the recitation being gabbled through, and resembling nothing so much as a preliminary run before a jump. All choirs have a tendency to this fault, which needs to be constantly kept in check.

Writing on this subject the late Sir John Stainer said: "The principal object to be aimed at in pointing is the apportioning out of the emphasis of the words to be sung, after the manner that an eloquent speaker would recite them; but as sentences are capable of as many accents, more or less sensible,
as there are words, diversity of opinion on the subject is not to
be wondered at."

With reference to the foregoing rules, the Cathedral Paragraph
Psalter reminds us that "written signs in their very nature
indicate but imperfectly the expressive plasticity which intelli-
gence and feeling demand. They are too often applied and
observed with a dull mechanical precision, which in all music,
especially in chanting, where free recitation is closely combined
with strict rhythm, is fatal to proper and pleasing effect. In
truth, the arts of chanting and pointing, like other arts, if they
are to be perfected, must be exercised with brains."

The modern ideal of chanting is for the actual value of the
notes to be disregarded altogether, and the rhythm of the words
to be given the first place—the words flowing
Ideal chanting. along just as if they were well recited, coupled
to a tune. It is most difficult to secure such
a perfect state of things; but there are people who maintain
that it can be achieved, if thought and time are given to the
subject, and if the verse in each case is read through so as to
get the natural swing or rhythm of the words. A psalter which
would help a choirmaster to attain the desired result would be
a great boon.*

We will now offer a few hints which may be found helpful
on special points:

Some hints.

(1) It will be found of use in keeping the
choir together, to insist that all "eds" should
be pronounced as separate syllables, e.g. —
delivered, not deliver'd; rejoiced, not rejoic'd.

(2) Psalms should be chanted evenly and without effort, and
mf as a general rule not exceeded, without special indication to
the contrary.

(3) Commas should be slightly observed, but only as in good
reading; they are generally made much too long. When used
before the vocative case they should be omitted, e.g., in "Thou,
O God," where the comma after "Thou" ought not to be
observed.

(4) Penitential Psalms must not be taken so slowly as to
drag.

(5) In practising it will be found a useful plan to make any
two boys sing a verse by themselves; this will give the other
boys a rest and enable the choirmaster to find out the unsteady
chanters.

* There has lately arisen a body of pioneers, consisting of clergy, literary
men, and professional musicians, who are hard at work on a system of
pointing which, they claim, will do away with the angularity of the present
Anglican chanting, if the directions they give are carefully followed. But
we still await the publication of this Psalter.
(6) Chants in a low key are rather a snare to boys; if, in consequence, it should be found that they shout with the chest voice, the chant should be transposed for practice into a higher key, where they are unable to use that register.

It may be well to mention that the colon as used in the Psalms is not the same as the colon in ordinary punctuation.

**Colon.**

It is not necessarily a stop at all, but merely divides the verse into two parts, as was the custom in the Jewish services.

There seem to be three methods of chanting in vogue: first, "decani" and "cantoris" singing alternate verses; second (with a double chant) each side singing two verses; third, dividing each verse into two, each side singing half a verse, according to the antiphonal structure of the Psalms. The first is the method generally adopted and, whether correct or not, undoubtedly produces the best musical effect. Frequent changing from side to side is restless, unless done to absolute perfection. Whichever method be adopted, there must on no account be any pause between the verses as they are taken up by each side.

In the choice of chants* the capabilities of the choir must always be the guide; but one rule should be observed, namely, that in making a change from one chant to another, the keys ought to be related†. To have two chants succeeding each other in the same key is monotonous, and to have two in totally disconnected keys is inartistic. Spirited or joyful music should not be coupled to penitential words, or vice versa.

Single chants are too often used for long psalms: there may be valid literary reasons for this, but the effect is tedious and tiresome to listen to, and it is much to be desired that a change should somehow be made, if only to another single chant, contriving this with a due regard to the sentiment of the words‡.

Single chants are suitable for the Canticles, especially for those that are short and have an odd number of verses. The double chant is useful for a long psalm, though it should not be used so as to obscure the antiphonal structure of the poetry. All chants, whether single or double or quadruple, should be employed with due regard to the sense of the words.

One of the most serious mistakes that a young choirmaster

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* Chants are being increasingly used for the Canticles in place of set services, in order to promote congregational singing.
† See the Author's "Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services," Chapter V.
‡ See Appendix, "Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services."
CHURCH CHOIR TRAINING

The book is to choose chants with high reciting notes. Unless the boys are first-rate and produce their voices with ease, it will in most cases be very trying to the listener, for a high reciting note is most difficult to maintain after many verses have been sung. It will also prevent the congregation from joining in.* Chants with straightforward harmonies and melodies and without high reciting notes, are the best to use, and the most serviceable to the ordinary parish church choir.

To those who wish to pursue intelligently the subject of psalm treatment, one cannot recommend a more fascinating study than Dean Perowne’s “Book of Psalms,” where their history, formation and development are dealt with in a most scholarly manner.

It will be admitted by most people that unaccompanied responses are usually sung in a very untidy manner, therefore, before leaving the subject of chanting, we will make a suggestion which will obviate this. These responses should all be pointed in a way similar to that suggested for the psalms. If we take, for instance, the first response in the morning service, it will be sufficient as a guide to the others:—

79. \[\text{Suggested rendering.}\]

And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

80.

And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

If two minims in a bar are counted at a moderate tempo, and it is sung as indicated, there will be some chance that the words and notes will go smoothly and well together. One must not be too mechanical in giving the precise value to the notes; these are merely guiding signs, and the words must have first consideration. The choir should first recite the response without any music, and when the natural rhythm of the words is impressed on their minds by means of a slight emphasis on the word “mouth,” then let the music be added.

Responses sung in this way, and without effort, are a real pleasure to the musical ear. There are many responses scattered through the various services in the Prayer Book which would sound infinitely better if practised and sung in the manner suggested above.

* The remarks in Chapter XII, page 61, about transposing hymn-tunes so that the congregation can sing, apply with equal force to all chants.
CHAPTER XII.

HYMNS.

We must now proceed to hymn singing, which should be within the powers of every church choir, however humble.

It will be interesting and instructive to know something about the origin of hymns, and the following quotation from Sir John Stainer's studies on the subject will be sufficient for our purpose: "The period of the Reformation," he says, "was one of great musical activity. For some time previous a quiet and half-concealed preparation had been going on in the circulation among the people of popular hymns and their tunes in the vernacular, of course, only sung in private. When Luther furnished his followers with metrical versions of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and other portions of the Old Office Books, there were no bounds to the popularity of both hymns and tunes. Edition followed edition, under the title of 'Geistliche Lieder,' etc."

Now it is the duty of all choirmasters to render at least five or six hymns every Sunday, and to see that the utmost is made of them in intelligence and reverence.

Different kinds of hymns. The art of hymn singing does not consist, as some people seem to think, in "making a joyful noise." A loud, irreverent race through hymns, which is so often described and excused as "heartly singing," is rightly denounced by Dr. Troutbeck as most objectionable. On the other hand, that mawkish, sentimental drawl, which lingers on favourite words and slackens down to express grief or emotion, is equally to be condemned.

Congregations must have opportunities of singing during the service, if only to prevent their joining in an octave lower in the Anthem! This unmusical obbligato has often taken place, even in solos that are favourites and fairly familiar. Hymns, however, are essentially the people's portion of a musical service, and every effort should be made to encourage congregational singing. In singing the hymns the choir's duty is to lead the people and incite them to join in and take their part; the congregational element in our services must never be overlooked, and a hymn well sung will have a wonderful effect on any mass of people.

It is almost impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules
as to the pace of hymns; tastes differ widely on this point, and different places of worship all have their pace of hymns. But a good and safe guide will be that they should never drag. It must be realized that at whatever pace they may be taken, the congregation will always lag behind. But a steady decided swing, with no tendency to violent changes in expression, will encourage the people considerably and tend to keep them in time. The beautiful German chorales, of course, must not be hurried. Such an example as Hymns A. & M., 379:

\[
\text{81.}\quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{Now thank we all our God.}\end{array}
\]

requires a broad and dignified style; any hurrying of such tunes as these would utterly ruin their stately character and destroy all impressiveness.

A processional hymn requires to be taken at a rather slower pace than those which are sung in the choir stalls. At the same time, anything funereal is a mistake, as the slower the choir get, the more liable they are to fall to pieces; a steady march time is what is generally required. A good example is Hymns A. & M., 231, which is often chosen for the processional at a choral wedding service.

\[
\text{82.}\quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us.}\end{array}
\]

The first verse should be sung in unison as the procession starts; this seems to be the pace with more marked swing than it the choir began in harmony. One should always oppose having as a processional a hymn-tune which contains indefinite marks of time; such hymns are seldom a success.

Hymn-tunes in triple time often present difficulties. For example the tune to Hymns A. & M., 266, is seldom sung in good time, the crotchets being usually hurried and the long notes shortened; and the fact of its being well known and a favourite causes the time to suffer still more! Other hymns in triple time will need special care as to pace, if they are not to lose all dignity and resemble a dance.

We have already spoken of hymns as being the part of the service in which the congregation should join. That being the case, we shall find it desirable, in many instances, to transpose some of the tunes down, it may be half a tone, or a whole tone, or even more where the treble part is pitched

* See Chapter VIII, page 32.
high. In doing this, the choirmaster must, however, be careful to see that when the tune is transposed downwards the bass part does not go below the usual vocal compass. Congregations always shy at high notes, even when they can reach them, but the tunes being thus transposed they will be encouraged to sing; and, we may add, many tunes are more effective in a lower key than that in which they are written.*

Now a few words as to expression marks. These have, in a few hymn-books, been entirely omitted; an omission due, probably, to the fact that in other books they were overdone, and slavishly followed by choirs. Many instances could be quoted where such marks are quite unnecessary, as, for instance, in the last line of Hymns A. & M., 219, which is marked piano:

![Music notation](image)

His change-less name of love.

Theatrical effects, as sudden changes from loud to soft, etc., never add to the dignity of a service. Expression marks should be used merely as an indication that some change of sentiment is expressed in the words; and any person with ordinary intelligence should be able to realize this by merely looking at the verse.

What was said in Chapter VIII on indefinite marks of time will apply with special force to hymn-tunes. The \( \text{\textbeta} \) (pause) will require a definite number of beats allotted to it, and the expressions rall. and ad lib. might in most cases be ignored altogether. Let us take a favourite hymn,† Hymns A. & M., 257:

![Music notation](image)

I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come

There is a rall. and a pause at the end of the first line; how rarely is this well sung! the reason being that the members of the choir have their idea (not always unanimous) of the rall., and the organist his, and, perhaps, the congregation theirs. Here we would suggest that the rall. be entirely left out, and two extra beats allowed for the pause: then we may hope for a simultaneous rendering without sentimental dr awling. The

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* See Chapter XI, page 59.
† Quoted from Chapter IV in the Author’s “Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services.”
same remark applies to Hymns A. & M., 365, where twice in the second half of the hymn rit. and rit. un poco occur:—

6th Line.

```
rit.
```

All we hope to be, Body, soul, and spirit.

```
rit. un poco.
```

All we yield to Thee.

These might well be omitted altogether.

Pauses may occasionally be introduced into L.M. hymn-tunes where there is a succession of notes of unvarying length without any break between the lines, as in the Hymns A. & M., 263, "Take up thy cross." A pause at the end of the second and last lines, equal to the lengthening of the last note by two beats, in each case seems desirable.

In most cases where roll. is marked, meno mosso would be a more appropriate expression; and, if observed literally, would have a better effect than the "gradually getting slower," implied in roll., each member of the choir having his own idea of "gradually." Rallezando should, however, at all times be sparingly used. At the conclusion of a hymn or a final Amen it has great effect, but if it becomes a mannerism of the choir, and is continually introduced into the service, it will irritate much more than impress.

When rests occur in a hymn-tune, care will be necessary so that all the voices observe the periods of silence simultaneously, otherwise vocal absurdities will result, e.g., in such a hymn as Hymns A. & M., 174, fourth line:—

```
4th Line.
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Long notes, such as breves, must be held their full time value.

The double bar in hymn-tunes has nothing whatever to do with the music, but relates entirely to the words and merely indicates the end of a line in the hymn; it does not follow, however, that the sense of the words finishes at the same point, for instance in Hymns A. & M., 334, second verse:—

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Loving Saviour, Thou didst give Thine own life
```

too.

So far is this from being the case that we must now consider
the all-important question of phrasing. By the word "phrasing," as applied to a hymn, is meant, roughly speaking, the observance of the correct breathing places, and these must be according to the sense of the words. The customary idea that breath can always be taken at the end of a line is an utter fallacy. Take the above example, Hymns A. & M., 334, second verse: "Loving Saviour, Thou didst give"—it is obvious that the sense of the words is not complete at the end of the first line of music, and, of course, breath ought not to be taken at that point; one must "give" something, and the sense is not complete till part of the next line is added, "Thine own life," etc. The question will, no doubt, be asked:—"Where is breath to be taken?" And the only satisfactory answer is:—"Wherever you would take it in good and intelligent reading." In the above example the proper place for breathing is obviously after the word "Saviour" in the first line, and again after "life" in the second line. Or again, take Hymns A. & M., 207: "Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed"—where the sense of the words is not finished till the second line of the music, "His tender last farewell." Breath must be taken after the word "Redeemer," and then again after "farewell."

Very little attention is, as a rule, given by choirmasters to the words as compared with the music, with the result that the sense is marred or practically lost, whereas the words should, after the tune has been learned, be the first consideration. In Hymns A. & M., 203, for instance, what a difference it will make if the words are properly considered! The climax of the whole hymn is contained in the last verse:

"Thee, my Master, and my Friend,

Vindicating and enthroned,

Unto earth's remotest end

Glorified, adored and own'd!"

The ideas it expresses must be brought out by clear articulation and phrasing, with due emphasis—this does not mean over-accentuation—on the words "Master," "Friend," "enthroned," and the whole of the last line. Unless this is done the effect will be tame and unintelligible, and will make no appeal to the hearers.

We have a somewhat different example in Hymns A. & M., 160:

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88. Holo - ly, Holo - ly, Holo - ly!
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Here the thrice repeated "Holy" is intentional, each "Holy" being applied to a separate Person of the Trinity, and the whole point of the hymn is missed if these words are not properly emphasized, and the commas observed.
The idea prevalent in some churches that the *Amens* may be sung in no particular time is wrong and unsatisfactory. They ought to be looked upon as the climax of the hymn, and should be sung in strict time, two beats being given to each note

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\begin{align*}
\text{A - m - e - n.}
\end{align*}
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all the voices finishing together crisply and neatly. In deciding whether the *Amen* is to be *f* or *p*, the context must be considered, and the *Amen* should partake of the same character as the hymn itself or its last verse. For instance, the Eastertide and Ascensiontide hymns require *ff* *Amen*; but for the more solemn hymns, such as those for Lent, Passiontide and the Burial of the Dead, a softer *Amen* will be more appropriate.*

CHAPTER XIII.

REHEARSALS AND CHURCH MUSIC.

Method in the management of rehearsals will often save time, temper and fatigue. Before dealing with musical matters, let us imagine the delightful possibility of a choirmaster having a choir practice room, and being able to arrange the details of it for his choir work. In it he should certainly have a small grand or upright pianoforte (pianette) over which he can keep an eye on his choristers while he is seated playing. A pianoforte is the best instrument to use for rehearsals. The harmonium should be avoided: there is a danger lest the boys should unconsciously imitate its tone; but it will do no great harm if it is only used to start or help the music along with an occasional chord.

Ranged round the pianoforte should be benches enough to accommodate all the boys without crowding. The walls of the room should be lined with cupboards, some fitted with music shelves, some with hooks for cassocks and surplices. Corresponding to his place in the choir should be the hook allotted to each chorister, and in front of it he should stand when robed for a service, ready for the signal to start in procession. This start can then be made without shuffling, pushing, or whispering, the whole choir in the exact order in which they are to sit in

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*For further remarks on hymns the reader is referred to the Author's "Organ Accompaniment of the Church Services," Chapter IV.*
church. This arrangement would probably be impossible in many churches, but where practicable, even in a modified degree it will be found helpful towards good order. In most newly built churches one is happy to find much larger rooms for vestries and for choir purposes, without being obliged always to use the church itself for choir practices.

It is well to conduct as much of the rehearsals as possible unaccompanied. This practice has many advantages: the choirmaster will hear mistakes in the inner voices more clearly; it will conduce to self-reliance, and save the choir from a slavish dependence on an instrument, pianoforte or organ. Should anything go wrong with the organ or the accompaniment at a service—and this is not an uncommon occurrence—the choir, if they have been rehearsed carefully without the help of an instrument, will be alert and never at a loss, or show, as they are apt to do, signs of falling to pieces.

All the music should be kept in cases, carefully numbered and catalogued, so that any Anthem or Service can be found without delay. The catalogue should be placed in the hands of the choir librarian, whom the choirmaster will probably be obliged to superintend at first, in order to show him that details of neatness and order are not beneath his notice! Sheet music will be all the better if strongly cased in brown paper; the trifling expense involved will be found an economy in the long run.

In trying new music it will be found a good plan to take it at a slower pace than marked, and without any regard to expression marks, rallentando, &c., etc., to begin with; when the notes are mastered tempo can be increased without difficulty, but the pace should never be such as to interfere in any way with the pronunciation of the words or the clearness of the musical passage. The expression will require separate and special treatment.

It has sometimes been found effective to put an indifferent singer between two good ones; a boy who is slow and wanting in life and alertness has a better chance of falling into the right way if he hears good, bright singing on either side of him.

Some choirmasters recommend that two boys should sing from the same copy, as one helps the other; but there are quite a number of experienced men who urge the contrary view, namely, that each boy should be provided with his own copy, if only as a means of making him self-reliant.

It is a wise plan to let some, if not all, of the boys learn the solo
or verse part of the music, if not too difficult, and to call upon any one or two of them unexpectedly to sing it.

All boys to learn solo part. This gets them into the way of solo work when their time comes to be solo boys, and in any case keeps them occupied and, therefore, keen. The practice of always allowing two boys to sing the solo is a good one. In a fair-sized church it will add volume, and the fact will not be detected if both the boys produce their voices on the same method.

One of the best ways to make the practice interesting is to let the exercises given to the boys—whether in breathing, flexibility, intonation, awkward intervals, or what not—have some distinct bearing on the music in hand. The choirmaster must use his ingenuity in thinking these out, but exercises carried out in this way will serve a double purpose, for by adopting such a method he will save much time, tune up the choristers' voices, and get much of the music learnt at the same time. It is a plan which can be enlarged to almost any extent, and if well worked out and acted upon will prove an immense advantage to himself.

The more uninteresting items should always be practised first, when the choir is fresh. Any difficult music, for the same reason, should not be left to the end, when voices are tired and keenness is on the wane. It is bad policy to grind at one thing at such length that the choir becomes stale and weary, for it is almost impossible to sing well when bored. This is, doubtless, one of the reasons why, when a piece of music has been indifferently sung at the practice, it is often well and crisply rendered at the service; the singers come to it fresh, and have forgotten their boredom when practising it.

It is essential, if the full rehearsal is to be interesting and instructive to the adults, quickly got through and effective, that the boys should be prepared and ready with their work before the men arrive. More time can then be given to the men's parts, and such matters as ensemble and finish will have more chance of consideration. Moreover, it is irritating for men whose time may be precious to have to sit and wait while boy are being coached. It is well always to make the choir sing quietly at rehearsals, except for final effects; it saves the voices, causes less fatigue, and is excellent practice in control. There need be no fear of their not singing loudly enough at a service, excepting, of course, the shirkers, of whom there is a small percentage in every choir.

A choirmaster ought to have a detailed plan of work for the
practice made out—at least in his own mind—and know not only in what order he wishes the music taken, but the effects he desires to get in its interpretation. Plan of work prepared. We ought never to hear: "Now, let me see, what shall we try next?" or the tentative question: "Gentlemen, do you feel quite happy in that lead, or shall we try it again?" The men, if they are anxious to avoid work and get away, will be certain to give the usual answer that "It will be all right at the service!"

The choirmaster must use his own judgment and be definite, and if he is uncertain himself he should not admit it, but try the passage again to make sure. He should never go back through the entire composition to correct a few mistakes, but explain what is wrong and where, before trying even a part of the music over again, and be very explicit and distinct as to the bar and page where he wants the start made, so that no one can have the excuse for making a bad attack of not having found his place. Suitable places should be chosen for beginning; and the start must not be made in the middle of a phrase, but at some more or less easy bar in the music; after a rest is usually a good point from which to repeat a passage.

In correcting mistakes, wrong notes, or faulty intonation, it is indispensable that the choirmaster should possess an analytical ear. He must be able to find out the individual who is wrong, but, bearing in mind that choristers are very sensitive beings, it is always wiser not to mention him by name. If, for instance, a "decani" tenor sings flat, say: "Tenors on the 'decani' side are out of tune. Would you mind trying such and such a passage again?" Making corrections in this collective, impersonal fashion often saves hurt feelings. Obviously it is necessary to be quite certain before speaking, as any slip on the part of the choirmaster may interfere with the respect with which he is regarded.

Again, in correcting mistakes it may be that the teacher is in the wrong and not the chorister; if so, it is well to own up like a man, and acknowledge the mistake. It is the shortest, wisest, and truest course to pursue, and will tend to raise rather than lower him in the estimation of his choir.

Long pauses should never be allowed; but one thing should follow another without unnecessary waste of time. "Business should be business" at a rehearsal. If it is to be a success, and if the respect of the adult members of the choir is to be gained, this maxim must be adopted, and conversation and gossip kept till the work is finished.
The choirmaster should often go to the bottom of the church during a rehearsal to hear the effect of his labours; hearing his choir from some way off, in other words, placing himself in the position of a member of the congregation, will teach him a great deal, and he will be astonished at the difference which a little distance makes in the general effect.

Choral singing, to have any telling effect, must be crisp and never slovenly. Brightness is essential, not only in church music, but in the man who teaches it. For the choirmaster who is anxious that everything should go well there are many irritating moments. It is easy to preach, but it is more difficult to practise, and if anyone wants to put his temper to a test, let him try choir-training for a few weeks. There are times when extra firmness is necessary; his own judgment must tell him when to exercise it; but he must be resolute in not showing his annoyance even when he knows it to be thoroughly justified, remembering that the moment he loses his temper he gives himself away.

And here a word of warning is necessary: let him never be guilty of the indiscretion of reprimanding the men before the boys. This will always be resented, and a word to them privately will have infinitely greater effect. On the other hand, it is worse than unwise to talk at the men through the boys; it is a pity in every way to resort to this mean expedient, for as often as not the men do not take the hint, and the correction is thrown away. There will be many directions which will have to be given from time to time to the men as well as to the boys, and it is well to see that they are carried out. One such is to insist on their finding their places in their books beforehand at a service, and not waiting till they miss the all-important point of starting. To see a man still fumbling with the leaves of the Psalter in the middle of the first verse of a psalm is disheartening; and he is not likely to shine in the attack! The ecstatic soul also, who loses himself so completely in the music that he is generally a beat behind, will require some plain speaking, and this is hard to administer to one who is earnest in his work, for such earnestness is not too common.

When a choirmaster has to find fault, let it be in the fewest words possible. Boys respect a short and sharp reprimand, but a long harangue does no good at all. The best punishment for a troublesome boy is one in which, unfortunately, the choirmaster suffers too, namely—making him stay behind and
practise after the others have gone off to play. This will be found most effective, and holding this punishment over the offender will, as a rule, deter him from indulging in what he calls "larks."

A word or two must be added on the subject of solos, more especially as applying to voluntary choirmen. The choirmaster will have a good deal to put up with in this particular. Cases have been known where a choirman, after singing some popular song at a "Penny Reading," has got an encore from his friends. Elated at his success, he comes to the choirmaster with a rather a bolder front and says: "Why don't you put me down to sing 'Comfort ye' and 'Every Valley'?"" The moment that it is suggested that this difficult solo is a little beyond his powers, he thinks it is time to leave the choir and join some other where his talents will, perhaps, be more fully appreciated. Solos must often be sung by men with small experience, who, moreover, have not made much study of their art. There are many choirmen, even professionals, who are not artistically minded, and it is a difficult matter to make them enjoy doing a simple composition perfectly. If they could only feel the pleasure of singing an easy piece well, they would then understand how bad the effect is of attempting music beyond their capacities.

Music within the choir's capacity. It is sad to see village choirs in too many cases struggling with music much beyond their powers. The consideration should be—can the choir do this? not—how good it will be for them to try it! Surely the hearers have some right to be taken into account! No congregation can be expected to listen with interest and attention—to say nothing of patience—to music badly sung; nor can music indifferently interpreted be considered an aid to devotion, in spite of the best intentions.

One of the essentials of a good service is to do well whatever is undertaken, and to insist on thoroughness in details. One often hears an elaborate anthem where the small points of the service are lacking in finish; whereas perfect finish in those points, and no anthem at all, would be much more elevating and satisfying.

The choirmaster ought to regard the perfect rendering of the psalms, hymns, responses, monotonizing, and the various details of the service as his paramount duty; these should claim his chief attention; but where there is a set service or an anthem on the choir list, other things are too often looked upon as quite secondary. It is natural that choirmen should be ambitious, and eager to try difficult music, but the results are, in many cases, sadly inartistic. Set services and
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anthems should be held out as a reward to the choir; and the choirmaster must have strength of mind to resist using all the precious time at a rehearsal in practising them in order to please his choir, more especially if it involves the exclusion from the practice of the other parts of the services which are really more important. The psalms in particular require a good deal of time given to them if they are to be successfully performed.

In the choice of music the choirmaster has not always a free hand; he will have a good many different opinions to contend with, musical and otherwise. He will require

Choice of music. all his tact to convince the subscriber of £5 per annum to the choir fund that he or she is not always right, without giving offence. It is a curious and lamentable fact that in music alone of all the arts people, however ignorant, think they are entitled to pronounce judgment. Futil arguments such as: “My father had the charge of a large parish for forty years,” or “My dear mother had a most beautiful voice,” are adduced in support of their claims to knowledge, and they think in consequence that their criticisms cannot be in fault. Such little traits in human nature require delicate handling.

It is a great pity that a percentage, at any rate, from the rich store of old English Cathedral music, unsurpassed in any other country, should not be sung and made familiar in our churches. These masterpieces appear in English church music. to be almost entirely ignored in the parish church, and the sentimental and “sugary” compositions of quite another school seem to have taken their place. This substitution is not always the fault of the choirmaster; people require much education before they can appreciate the contrapuntal school, and the criticisms of the congregation—especially those few who really take an interest in the choir—are, unfortunately, against what they call “dull” music, and strongly in favour of the sentimental anthem with its cheap musical effects. There are uninteresting anthems and services in the “good old English school” as in every other school, but there are also many gems which are entirely overlooked. One is under no obligation to choose uninteresting music, but a selection can be made from those which all musical authorities agree are really beautiful. If music of the modern school is required, the choirmaster cannot do better than keep to Wesley Modern school and his followers. Wesley inaugurated what of church music. may be called the modern phase of English church music, and supplied a connecting link between the old and the new.

There is a great tendency amongst musicians of a certain
type to smile at church composers, even at those of the Madrigal period. It is chiefly because they have not studied the works of that time, and are perhaps not satisfied unless they see music plastered with "sospirando" or "appassionato," or unless it contains startling effects in modulation. There is surely another branch of music more suited to ecclesiastical purposes, which does not depend upon these things, but on the broad, pure, diatonic harmonies which give a grand and noble effect, analogous to that produced by the massive Norman pillars of the cathedral itself. Disciples of Wagner will do well to remember how he recognized this. It is only necessary to turn to the opening church scene in the "Meistersinger" to learn how the master mind can use all schools of writing for his special purpose. Notice the magnificent contrast of the broad, ecclesiastical harmonies of the Chorale standing out against the fragments of the "Preislied" introduced as interludes in Act I:

90.

\[ \text{Voices: When to thee our Saviour went.} \]

\[ \text{Orchestra: etc.} \]
There are a few churches which indulge in very florid music. Some of it certainly seems to be out of place and unfitted for the church service; but of course it may suit the tastes of the people who worship at the particular church. The words appear to be relegated to a second place, the ornamental accompaniments standing out as the principal feature. This kind of music makes one think sometimes whether another Palestrina and another Council of Trent are not necessary!

After all the foregoing recommendations and criticisms, we must, in concluding this chapter turn to the more pleasant task of giving praise where praise is due.

Praise due to the choirmaster. The choirmaster who works hard—and there are many—producing a really good rendering of a service with inadequate material, very often keeping a choir together by his own character and pleasant influence, certainly deserves more praise than usually falls to his lot. The tact, ability and judgment that are expected of a choirmaster are such as would do credit to a Minister of State; and all this for the miserable salary he usually receives! He is judged entirely by results, and no questions are asked as to how he gets or keeps his choir. In some cases indeed, no concern is shown as to whether the organ is in a fit state of repair—it may even be on the verge of tumbling to pieces at any moment! If the difficulties of the work—and they are many and thorny—are more fully understood and sympathetically inquired into by the mass of the people and by those in authority, the choirmaster would be more leniently judged.

Help and encouragement are needed not only by him but by the choir, whether paid or unpaid; and in places where these are given, what a different spirit of loyalty Encouragement and happiness prevails! No great things are necessary: an occasional outing, or some social gathering made pleasant, will be found most helpful in healing sores and cementing friendships.
CHAPTER XIV.

MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF A CHOIR.

Let us now turn to the personal qualities required in a man who aspires to be a good choirmaster. A thorough knowledge of music is, of course, a sine quä non; but that by itself is not a sufficient foundation on which to undertake the training of a choir. He must also possess an adequate knowledge of men and boys if he is to deal with them successfully. And for any success in dealing with them the first essential is that he should be a good disciplinarian. For want of this quality one has often seen all other gifts become useless and of no effect. No amount of learning, genius, or ability can compensate for the absence of discipline. One has heard the story of a talented and highly qualified young musician whose first practice ended in his being the victim of practical jokes and insults from his own choirboys. Strength of character is an important factor in maintaining discipline, and, in addition, definiteness, self-respect, quickness of insight, and a touch of self-confidence—all these are most desirable endowments, but seldom met with in their just proportions.

Besides possessing the quality of firmness, resulting in good discipline, the choirmaster must be deeply interested in his work, and be able to impart this interest to the point of enthusiasm to his choir. Any apathy on his part is immediately caught by the boys, and all esprit de corps goes to pieces in a moment when he, the chief officer, loses keenness.

Next in importance, not only for the sake of the choir but also for his own sake, comes method. By being methodical* he will save hours of labour. If he does not naturally possess method, let him make a determined effort to acquire it. Almost more than any other virtue it is its own reward. Again, in the matter of discipline just mentioned, let him not be above disciplining himself in such an important trifle as punctuality.

It is obviously useless for a choirmaster to find fault with choristers for being late, unless they know that he can be depended upon to be in good time himself. And when one says "good time,"

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*This will be further dwelt upon in Chapter XV, "Art of Teaching."
this does not mean rushing in at the last moment, too late to
set right any little accident that may confront him, but before
time, to ascertain that everything for which he is responsible
is in readiness, so that the choir may begin the service without
any delay. What has been said on this point is twice as
important where a man's time is limited, and where he is
practically dependent on himself for everything.

Rushing in at the last moment is sometimes a form of conceit,
and conceit in any form is a fatal defect. It is often exhibited
in pointing out mistakes and making correc-
tions, the choirmaster little realising, as he
endeavours to “show off” his knowledge at
the expense of the chorister, that he is running the risk of very
unfavourable criticism himself.

Then as to witty or sarcastic remarks: great care is needed
in this direction. The wish to be thought funny is a positive
disease in some people; but it is neither
Witty remarks. right nor wise to be amusing where sacred
matters are concerned, and thereby the
feelings of some members of the choir may be hurt. Any
necessary directions should be given quietly, not with the idea
of exhibiting the cleverness of the teacher, but with the sincere
desire to improve the music. One can be master without being
oppressively superior.

In the matter of keeping the boys, it is important to remem-
ber that they are very susceptible to kindness, coupled with
firmness and justice. The town boy has no
Kindness. equal in quickness of discernment; therefore
it is very necessary that kindness should
be judiciously exercised, and never allowed to degenerate into
favouritism or petting, which will make the boy inclined to take
advantage, or turn him into either a ninny or a sneak.

The foolish petting of solo boys, for instance, sometimes
indulged in by kind-hearted members of the congregation, will
often make them very tiresome for the choirmaster to deal with. Tips do not hurt them
so much, but flattery and too much notice are
Potting. neither wise nor beneficial.

Sympathy for the boys can be shown by allowing them
to sit down occasionally at rehearsals. They get tired with
too much standing, and consequently inatten-
dive. Consideration should be shown for the
physical side of the chorister, if only because
it affects his voice very directly. Long services are trying for
adults and therefore more so for boys. In some churches, an ex-
cellent plan is adopted of allowing the boys to leave at the hymn
before the sermon. The only drawback to this arrangement is
that they will probably go whooping down the street outside the church, without a thought for the preacher who is giving out his text!

We live in an age when reverence is at a discount. A reminder on this head from the choirmaster is not at all superfluous; and slovenliness and lolling in the stalls are by no means confined to the boys. Another form of reverence which might be adopted by clergy and choir alike is to maintain a calm exterior if a blunder should occur in the service, and not fuss or fume or make signs. Such agitations are generally all to no purpose; it must be remembered that the musical intelligence of the mass of the people is not of a high calibre, and more often than not, if attention is not drawn to the mistake by movements of the choirmaster’s head or some facial expression, it will pass unnoticed!

We must now consider one or two other points connected with the choirmaster and his boys. The most trying fact which he has to face with a boy’s voice, is the fawness of the years in which it has to be trained, and then the disappearance of the voice altogether when it is at its best. To obviate that fluctuation to which, in consequence of this fact, all choirs are liable, it has been the universal habit in large choirs to take young boys as probationers. This plan should be carried out wherever possible, in every choir, small or large. No choir ought to be perceptibly impoverished by the loss of one or two leading boys when their voices break. By the judicious adding and training of probationers, the loss of a leading boy will be less felt. This replenishing of a choir from the bottom before it empties at the top is a most necessary art. We are told, in the ordinary things of life, not to anticipate misfortune; but the great misfortune of losing a trained head boy when his voice breaks suddenly should certainly be anticipated and provided against in some measure by a wise and far-seeing choirmaster. The smaller the average number of boys, the more far-seeing must the choirmaster be in this respect. Another very strong reason in favour of probationers is that the imitative power of young boys, which we have already mentioned, is so great that such beginners will learn voice-production from the others almost unconsciously and with little trouble to themselves or to their teacher. They will, as it were, “inhale the musical atmosphere around them.” It may also be found useful to be able to degrade a troublesome boy from his place in the regular choir and promote a probationer for a time in his stead. Such a disgrace is, generally, a most effectual punishment.
A depressing fact in many a choirmaster's experience is that directly he has worked some special boy up to the point of becoming useful, he may be snatched away from him and the whole fruit of his labours be lost by a more lucrative offer from another church. It will be easily seen how unfair it is that a choirmaster should expend great trouble, pains and time on an untrained boy, and improve him, perhaps in other ways besides cultivating his voice, merely for the benefit of another and more highly-paid choir. There are various ways of obviating this calamity which we will now suggest:—

I. Before the boy is admitted into the choir, it should be insisted that he fill up, and that his parent or guardian sign, an application form. This ought to contain the following particulars: (1) Name; (2) Address; (3) Age; (4) Date of baptism; (5) Where he attends school; (6) Whether he already belongs to any church choir. This will give all the needed information and prevent any unfairness to other churches, since, if he is in another choir, he ought not to be allowed to transfer his affections, unless the written permission is given by his vicar or choirmaster.

II. When he is admitted to the choir, it is essential that a legal agreement should be drawn up and duly stamped and signed by the parents and by the vicar or churchwardens. The church will seldom be reduced to disputing it in a court of law. This agreement should, of course, state clearly all that is required of him and some scheme as to the payment of his salary. A wise plan is to keep back a certain proportion of his money—about half—each quarter, and to place this in a trust fund where it is allowed to accumulate until his voice breaks, or he is obliged for any other reason to leave the choir. Should he leave without permission and without adequate reason, he forfeits the whole sum. On the other hand, if he remains faithful to the choir, he is entitled to receive, at the moment of leaving, an amount of money which will be found a great help towards his start in life.

When the payment of the choir is in the hands of the choirmaster, he must remember that in the case of a poor church a weekly payment will often be the means of ensuring regularity. The boys will usually make a point of attending when they know they are going to receive a shilling (or whatever it may be) which is sometimes very important to them.
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If a system of fines is imposed, the sum so obtained may be added at the end of the quarter to the salaries of the best boys, that is, those who have gained the highest number of marks for good behaviour.

When the boys are paid quarterly and half of their money is kept back and placed in the bank as suggested, it is advisable to send a quarterly report to the parents by post, showing the amount the boy has received in cash for the quarter, the total amount to date in the bank, and the amount (if any) deducted for fines, for misconduct, or absence. At the same time, the choirmaster can add any remarks as to regularity, punctuality, progress and conduct, which will show the parents the exact state of affairs, financial and moral.

Such a system as is here suggested requires patience and perseverance as well as method; but when once the scheme is in working order, it will be found to have very beneficial results; not the least being that it enables the choirmaster to keep in touch with, and get the help of, the parents in many difficult situations.

He will be well advised to base all his work on good traditions, and profit from the experience of others who have been "through the mill." This applies to all the business arrangements as well as to everything connected with the best methods of teaching and training.

Above all, he should never be tempted to indulge in eccentricities of any sort, nor permit the choir to do so. Some men rather rejoice in being what they call "original" when really the more appropriate word would be "unbalanced." They say they are not conventional, and have their own ideas, which they proceed to carry out by either allowing the music to be raced through, or to be sung extremely slowly, as their fancy dictates. But it should be remembered that anything exaggerated or grotesque is out of place in church; and if the choirmaster is thinking, as he ought, of helping others to worship, he will never give way to these peculiarities.

A good choirmaster is always in demand. But it will be found that the man most sought for nowadays is one who can train a choir, understands boys, and is able to keep order. Such a one, even if an inferior player, need never fear being without a post.
CHAPTER XV.

CONDUCTING AND TEACHING.

In addition to conducting at rehearsals (which he will have to do, especially when they are unaccompanied, as we have recommended), the choirmaster may also be called upon to conduct the performance of festival services or oratorios in church. As this is now a recognized part of his profession, something ought to be said on this head. Mr. Rockstro writes: "It may seem strange to claim for the mechanical process of beating time the rank of an element, and a very important element, necessary to the attainment of ideal perfection in art; yet Mendelssohn's method of managing the bâton proved to be one." Here we would like to observe that his management of the bâton was by no means all that made Mendelssohn so fine a conductor. Besides his musical genius, it was his concentration, his lack of self-consciousness, the giving over of himself body and soul to the work in hand, which made his power over his band so magnetic. This magnetism is given only to the few, but the conductor's best attempt towards it will be to make himself one in spirit and sympathy with the forces under his command.

To the novice in conducting, the warning as to the necessity of waiting and looking to see whether the organist and choir are ready is a very necessary one. It is the means of ensuring a simultaneous attack; yet whether from nervousness, or some other cause, the beginner will often omit this essential preliminary, and then is surprised that only a ragged entry is the result. The eye that plays such an important part in conducting must ever be on the watch—the eye and the magnetism spoken of being practically one and the same thing.

Conducting in church should always be dispensed with, if possible; but if it has to be done for any special reason, it should be done in a quiet and unobtrusive manner; any acrobatic display is to be avoided as entirely out of place. The amusing advice may be recalled: "If you want to be a popular conductor, take lessons in swimming and carpet beating." This throwing of body and arms about detracts from the solemnity of any service and does no good to the music. The back view of a man arrayed in a surplice indulging in such antics is absurd, and even irreverent.

It is both interesting and instructive to hear what the famous
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Berlioz has to say on this subject of conducting.* "It is of importance," he writes, "that the conductor in delivering his different directions should not move his arm much, and consequently not allow his stick to pass over much space; for each of these gestures should operate almost instantaneously, or at least take but so slight a movement as to be imperceptible. If the movement becomes perceptible, on the contrary, and multiplied by the number of times that the gesture is repeated, it ends by throwing the conductor behind in the time he is beating, and by giving to his conducting a tardiness that proves injurious. This defect, moreover, has the result of needlessly fatiguing the conductor, and of producing exaggerated evolutions verging on the ridiculous, which attract the spectator's attention and become very disagreeable to witness" . . . "As to the employment of noises of any kind whatever," he continues, "produced by the stick of the conductor upon his desk or by his foot upon the platform, they call for no other than unreserved reprehension. It is worse than a bad method, it is a barbarism."

Choirs must be taught to look to their conductor for the chief accents. These should be enough to keep the voices together.

It is not often necessary to use the whole of the arm in conducting; a loose wrist is the right thing, and all that is necessary as a rule for the guidance of a small body of singers. One of the essentials of a good conductor is to know what he wants and to see that he gets it. Definiteness of beat, however small, is the point to aim at; describing vague semicircles in the air is not likely to create precision in the ranks. But it is not an easy thing to get beginners to adopt this decision of beat.

The choir and the conductor must also understand one another; the lack of this has been known to cause ill-success to the efforts of even an experienced man when conducting a body of singers who are strangers to him. The choir must understand, and be in sympathy with the little ways of their conductor; that is, know what he wants by the slightest sign from his bâton or a look from his eye. Sir George Grove remarks: "In a perfect conductor mechanical excellence must be accompanied by knowledge, feeling, appreciation and the highest qualities of a musician; but these last will be of little avail without the former, or without the familiar relation between

* "Orchestration," by Berlioz.
the conductor and the band which long knowledge, or at any rate
several rehearsals, alone can give.” This, of course, is absolutely
ture, but an ideal that is seldom reached.
Now as to the different kinds of time which will have to be
indicated by the beat. It will hardly be necessary to
show how two or even four in a bar
should be represented; but of $\frac{3}{4}$ it
may be said that it is better with
the second beat outwards, that is,
to the right. As regards $\frac{3}{4}$ time:—if
the movement is quick, two beats in a bar will suffice; but if in
slow time, it may be necessary to indicate the unaccented
beats as well, and a good way is shown in the margin.
Such times as $\frac{5}{8}$ or $\frac{7}{8}$ have three accents in the bar
and are practically the same as $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{5}{8}$ for conducting
purposes.
For the guidance of those who may not have had the
advantage of hearing a work performed before they are
called upon to conduct it themselves,
Study the work. another extract from Berlioz on the
question of pace will be found use-
tiful:—“The conductor is above all bound to possess a
clear idea of the principal points and character of the work of
which he is about to superintend the performance or study,
in order that he may, without hesitation or mistake, at once
determine the time of each movement desired by the composer.
If he has not had the opportunity of receiving his instruc-
tions directly from the composer, or if the time has not been
transmitted to him by tradition, he must have recourse to the
indications of the metronome and study them well; the majority
of composers nowadays taking the precaution to write them
at the head, and in the course of their pieces. I do not mean
to say by this that it is necessary to imitate the mathematical
regularity of a metronome; all music so performed would become
of freezing stiffness, and I even doubt whether it would be
possible to observe so flat a uniformity during a certain number
of bars. But the metronome is none the less excellent to consult
in order to know the original time, and its chief alterations.”
A very difficult thing to conduct with success in choral music
is recitative; and as we shall see from Berlioz, whose words
come to us with great authority, it is seldom
done in right time. But if the conductor will
observe the following instructions, he may be
saved many a misunderstanding with his forces. Berlioz writes:
“Many conductors have the habit, when directing the orchestra
in recitatives, of paying no heed to the written divisions of the
bar, and of marking an up beat before that whereon a brief
orchestral chord occurs, even when this chord comes upon an
unaccented part of the bar:

91.

RECIT.

\[
\text{Par - les.}
\]

Orch.

In a passage such as this they raise the arm at the rest which
commences the bar, and lower it at the time of the chord.
I cannot approve of such a method, which nothing justifies, and
which may frequently occasion accidents in the execution.
Neither do I see why, in recitatives, the bar should not be
divided regularly, and the real beats be marked in their place as
in music beaten in time. I therefore advise for the preceding
example, that the first beat should be made down as usual, and
the stick carried to the left for striking the chord upon the
second beat, and so on for analogous cases, always dividing the
bar regularly."

This certainly seems to be sound advice; and if it were
adopted, we should have fewer false entries, and be spared that
irritating tapping with the bâton on the music
book just before the chord is to be played.

Indication
for a pause.

For a pause it is better to hold the bâton
quite still, and then, by a slight movement of
the stick, give the choir an indication when they are to cease
singing. The left hand is occasionally useful to suggest that a
passage is to be softened down, and a quiet and unobtrusive sign
can easily be made with it.

As the teacher may not always have the help of an instrument,
and may himself be without the gift of absolute pitch, it will be
useful for him to be able to give the key-note
from a tuning-fork. Supposing, therefore, that
he has a C tuning-fork, how, it may be asked,
is he to get the key-note of a piece in the key
of E♭? The best way is to sound the fork,
and to regard the C as a note in the scale of E♭. For example,
say "doh" for C, and if the music is in E♭, regard the C as the
6th note of the scale, and call it "lab"; then if "lab, te, doh!"
be sung, the new key-note will be reached without difficulty, and
the notes of the chord of E♭ can easily follow:

92.

\[
\text{Doh! lab te doh! sol mi sou.}
\]

Or suppose the music is written in the key of A♭, then regard
the C from the tuning-fork as "me," and sing, descending,
"me, ray, doh," and the key-note of A♭ will be the "doh," and the notes of the chord of A♭ can then be sung.

In all choir work, it is well to bear in mind the importance of training the boy's ear; to appeal to it, and to get him to realize mentally his defects, such as bad intonation, etc.

Ear-training and Appreciation. Nor should the "Appreciation" side of the work be neglected. The character of the music to be studied could be explained in a few words; its mood and style—whether solemn or joyful; the period at which it was written; its characteristics; also any interesting events connected with the life of the composer; the difference between his various works; the occasions for which the music was written; any difficulties under which he laboured, and so on. All such little details will quicken the boy's interest, and make the work much less mechanical and dull.

The gift of imparting knowledge is a great and rare one, but it can be studied with benefit to all concerned. It has already been pointed out that to be a good teacher Art of teaching, it is necessary first of all to have method.

This means, in general terms, the systematic arrangement and organization of means to secure the special end in view. Every choirmaster must decide for himself in the matter of arranging his work with the choir; but if his ways are of the mere "rule of thumb" order, he must not expect satisfactory results. He should study how to get the greatest amount of good intelligent work out of his choir with the minimum of effort. He must be able to appeal to them to co-operate with him, and in order to do this he must first gain their confidence. It is all-important, if he hopes to keep the intelligent attention of, say, thirty people, that he should give some thought and study to this subject beforehand. There are many reasons why a choirmaster should understand something of the art of teaching; the following are a few of the most obvious:

1. He has to teach music.
2. He frequently has inadequate means at his disposal in the shape of voices.
3. He has very limited time to devote to their training.
4. He is always expected to produce the best results.

To be a successful teacher he must know how to analyse a complex passage and reduce it to single difficulties, and practise these separately.

The choirmaster must beware of the temptation of hearing too much of his own voice either in directing or in singing. Sing to the choir, but not with them; and do not be continually preaching, exhorting or expounding.

Sing to the choir. It is waste of time. One of the secrets of successful teaching is to make a pupil use his
brains. Education is not so much dinner knowledge into the boy, as developing his slumbering activities, and thus promoting his mental growth. It must always be remembered that there is a great difference between those who can and do not mean to try, and those who cannot. Unintelligent obedience may be all very well for the moment, but it has no permanent educational value for the chorister.

Much more in many interesting directions could be said on this important subject; but it is hoped that these few hints will help a choirmaster to think it out further for himself. The directions and advice given have been definite, and no prejudice has consciously been allowed to play any part in what has been written. Naturally it will be impossible to please everyone, especially in the case of the method advocated for the production of the boy's voice. But the author is persuaded from personal experience, and judges by results, that for the choirmaster of the ordinary church choir Method I * is certainly the best to adopt. With its use there ought to be—among other good points—a disappearance of harshness, saving of fatigue, pure sympathetic tone, and good intonation.

Belonging to a choir should be a means of real education to a boy in many ways. One of its many advantages is the fact that in singing in parts he will have to express himself with restraint, and will learn the elements of co-operation and harmonious action with others.

Educational value of choir work.

We have only to look back a few years to see the enormous strides made in choral singing in our churches; and the credit of this is due almost entirely to the zeal and hard work of our choirmasters. As Sir Frederick Osceley said not very many years ago: "Choral music may now be heard in many a village church, where formerly only a few bad voices roared and howled to the accompaniment of a barrel organ, or to that of a few rural fiddlers in a gallery. It is impossible to overrate the importance of this onward step from every point of view; and it is a pleasant feature to contemplate in the general aspect of musical culture and development in England."

With the ever-increasing good work done by the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, and the Royal College of Organists, as well as the keen interest of churchmen in this subject, we may confidently hope that the interpretation of our church music will be carried to still greater perfection in the future.

* See page 11.
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<td>A. Rubinstein</td>
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TRIOS AND QUARTETS FOR TRELLE VOICES.

(Accompanied and Unaccompanied.)

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<td>Jane Elliott</td>
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<td>Do</td>
<td>G</td>
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<td>Old Scottish</td>
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<td>B to E</td>
<td>C to G</td>
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<tr>
<td>Highland laddie</td>
<td>From Hogg's Jacobite Relick</td>
<td>airs by</td>
<td>D to G</td>
<td>E to F</td>
<td>G to B</td>
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<td>The Campbell's are coming</td>
<td>Granville</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
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<td>Blasstuck</td>
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<td>G</td>
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<td>Clarence Raybould</td>
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<td>As a dancer dancing</td>
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<td>G</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Te Deum Laudamus (for Unitarian Service)</td>
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<td>Te Deum Laudamus</td>
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<td><strong>GANDY, WALTER.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Hudson, Henry.</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Communion Service, in D flat</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Benedicite</td>
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<td>Agnus Dei (S.A.T.B.)</td>
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<td>Prizes and Responses (S.A.T.B.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Three Christmas carols for Church use</td>
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<td><strong>Huntley, G. F.</strong></td>
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<td>Magnificat and Nunc Dianis</td>
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<td><strong>Kirbye, George.</strong></td>
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<td>O Jesu look (from anthems and motets) (T.T.C.T.B.)</td>
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<td><strong>Macpherson, Stewart.</strong></td>
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<td>Mass, in D for soprano solo, chorus and orchestra (Latin words)</td>
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<td><strong>Marks, A. Sidney.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Holy Communion in D (S.S.A.)</td>
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<td><strong>Milton, John.</strong></td>
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<td>Thou, God of might, No. 1, six anthems (T.A.T.B.)</td>
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<td>O Lord behold my miseries, No. 2, six anthems (TT.T.A.T.)</td>
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<td>O, had I wings, No. 3, six anthems (T.T.A.T.B.)</td>
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<td>If that a sinner’s sighs, No. 4, six anthems (T.T.A.T.B.)</td>
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<td>When David heard, No. 5, six anthems (T.T.A.T.B.)</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>I am the Resurrection, No. 6, six anthems (T.T.C.T.B.)</td>
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