

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF VOICE,
SHOWING THE RIGHT
AND WRONG ACTIONS OF
VOICE IN SPEECH AND SONG**

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The philosophy of voice, showing the right and wrong actions of voice in speech and song by
Charles Lunn

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By CHARLES LUNN.

"Before you can possibly be safe in dealing with Nature, you must get two or three kinds of cross proofs, so as to make sure not only that your hypothesis fits that particular set of facts, but that it is not contradicted by some other set of facts which is just as clear and certain."—*Huxley*.



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TO
THE MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION,

A PROFESSION IN WHICH SELF-ABNEGATION AND SCIENTIFIC

RESEARCH HAVE EVER REIGNED SUPREME,

This Essay,

WITH EVERY FEELING OF ADMIRATION, IS RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

THE following pages are a reprint of several papers published in the *Medical Press and Circular* with a view of explaining the differences which are found between the statements of musicians and physiologists, and are intended to place voice culture in its true position as a branch of surgical, rather than as a branch of musical art. The proposition of placing voice training into the hands of a different class of men to that which hitherto has held it with unchallenged authority may in the onset create dismay, and from the thoughtless members of the musical profession generate opposition ; but the proposal is Entirely Beneficial, and is not, as at first sight may appear, detrimental to the profession it seems injuriously to affect. The only effects of such change would be that true vocalists—those who desire not only to be singers, but also artistes, and who, therefore, require instruction both complete and profound—would be temporarily withdrawn from musical teachers only

to return after a time and add renewed and enhanced lustre to the beautiful art of song. Indeed, until musicians themselves insist upon isolating the three branches forming the complex art called singing, excellence will always remain an exceptional thing, forcing itself in spite of, not in consequence of, past training. So far as the art of song is concerned, there should be in each large town three men acting in friendly consort—one whose sole work should be to attend to the substratum and teach the production of true musical sound by the voice, implicitly obedient to the will of the possessor; a second—a musician proper—who should teach, on stern scientific principles, laws of æsthetics, or the arranging of present pleasurable impressions associated relatively for a predetermined end;* while the third and last should take these persons so developed and so taught and teach them the art of rightly associating words with accepted musical impressions, so that each appeal to the listener should be perfect of its kind, while neither appeal conflicts with the action of the other. This may appear Utopian; with that I have little to do; it has rested with me to see that at least my branch of art-work should no longer be o'erclouded with Error and her attendant Failure. So far as voice training is

* See Sully on "The Possibility of a Science of *Æsthetics*."

concerned, it has for years been calmly assumed that the majority of people are naturally created defective, and that a master can do what Nature herself has failed in doing. Monstrous, incredible, and impious assertion ! This, on the contrary, is the truth : All error and weakness, and all defect in tone, each and all of these are *induced*, and can therefore be *removed*. But, passing the after-application of voice training for the specific end of song, note how many, note how the majority, even, of public speakers, fail, not on account of intellectual, but entirely owing to physical incapacity ; all this could be averted by establishing at each University a Professorship of Voice Production, thus, by rightly-directed work, could be imparted to our future clergy, statesmen, and lawyers a perfect power to display their thoughts through spoken words uttered with enduring force and masterful control of tone. This at some future time will doubtless be done.

In most treatises on the voice the writers have confusedly mixed up the science of physiology with the surgical process of voice restoration ; thus, they have adorned their works with numerous diagrams extracted from physiological works : as all such diagrams tend only to confuse, it has been my endeavour to avoid this fault, and to argue on purely abstract principles. And now, little work, go on your mission : that you will meet with opposition—as all advanced thought

invariably does—is to be expected ; but there are more persons interested in truth than ever there are in its destruction, so to the bar of public opinion I appeal, confident in the ultimate acceptance of what I herein proclaim as true, and confident, too, that these truths are capable of conferring great—of conferring very great benefit, not only upon musical art, not only upon public orators, but, above all, upon the suffering and the enfeebled, whose debilitated health might be strengthened, and chest disease swept in great part from our shores.

CHARLES LUNN.

EDGBASTON, NEAR BIRMINGHAM.