

German is thus far richer than any of the other three tongues in vowel utterances ; and this, to our thinking, is one reason why German sounds so peculiarly grand when sung, the other reason being that the gutturals give vigour to the music while being somewhat toned down by it. Gutturals, when not too frequent or too loud, resemble the rough blast of a trumpet intermingling with the soft, rich melody of a harp, and the plaintive warbling of a flute, to which the other consonants and the vowels might, in turn, be likened.

Still, as spoken, English and French are not disfigured by the constant repetition of the harsh *ch* sound, nor, we may add, by the too frequent sibilants characteristic of German ; while, on the other hand, they have a far more copious assortment than Italian of vowels and diphthongs, and make up for falling short of German in this respect by possessing what German is without, a large number of combinations with *w*.

We have left nasal vowel sounds out of account in our table, they being on a distinct footing. In uttering nasal vowels the mouth is opened in exactly the same way for each as for true oral vowels ; but half the breath is allowed to pass down the nose. The different nasal vowels in use in French are heard in the words *mon, san(g), brun, main* (the last answering, as we have already pointed out, to our true oral sound in *man*). But we are inclined to consider nasal vowels as corrupt forms, and cannot see that the number of sounds thus added to the French category increase the beauty of the language.

The natural melody and harmony of French, German, and English may well be compared by examining three of the choicest extracts culled from the poets of the three nations. Such are the following. In each we have marked the vowel sound, simple or compound, where it occurs for the first time, by the figures placed opposite it in the table.

La mort a des rigueurs à nul autre pareilles :

$\bar{4}$   $\bar{3}$        $\bar{6}$   $\bar{8}$  5+7       $\bar{7}$   $\bar{2}$        $\bar{4}$

On a beau la prier ;

$\bar{3}$

La crnelle qu'elle est se bouche les oreilles,

$\bar{7}\bar{6}$                        $\bar{5}$   $\bar{1}$                        $\bar{2}$

Et nous laisse crier.

Le pauvre dans sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre,

Est sujet à ses lois ;

Et le garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre

N'en défend point nos rois.

—*Malherbe.*