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AN ELOCUTIONARY DRILL CHART.

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THE BREATH AND ITS GOVERNMENT.—The breathing required in public speaking or reading is a voluntary act which calls into play two independent sets or double sets of muscles, and may therefore be considered of two kinds, thorassic and diaphragmatic. The first is more commonly used by women, the second by men. In the first, you alternately raise and lower the ribs, that is, expand them upwards, outwards, side-wise, and towards the back, separating one from the other; and, again, compress them. The muscles used in the operation act upon the backbone as a fixed line, and their action is said to be in part direct, in part indirect. Figure No. 1 shows the chest as expanded; in No. 2 it is collapsed. The extension-motions given in the chart to reach these respective positions are similar to the means employed to restore breathing in persons who have been rescued from drowning, and, in certain cases well-known to the medical faculty, to produce or increase respiration in young children. Figure No. 3 exemplifies the action of the diaphragm.

Ordinarily in public reading or speaking, we should inhale noiselessly and through the nostrils only. If you raise the tongue against the roof of the mouth at the same time that you dilate the nostrils and contract the respiratory muscles, you may fill the lungs in an instant without closing the mouth. Times occur when you must draw your breath through the mouth and with noise, as in gasping; for example, where disease is simulated or trying situations are depicted; but, except where a pronounced effect is to be produced, such labored inhalation should be avoided, as both prejudicial to health and destructive of vocal power.