

lungs, where there are large muscles fitted to do this work, and from which place all the air in the lungs can be made to pass into sound, while the bronchial tubes of the upper chest are left in a passive condition in which they are free to vibrate and render the tones resonant, many, especially those of sedentary habits, expel the breath from the upper chest, overtaxing the weak muscles there, utilizing only a part of the air in the lungs and rigidly contracting the bronchial tubes. The same persons or others misuse also the muscles at the back of the nostrils, tongue and palate. Like the bronchial tubes, these, during the process of speaking, should be left in a passive condition so as to act as a sort of vibratory sounding-board to reinforce the tone and throw it forward. But often with every effort at articulation they are contracted, producing, as a result, the smothered or harsh nasal tone so common among us, if not, as frequently happens, on account of the irritating effects of a wrong use of the organs, chronic catarrh or laryngitis—the latter so characteristic of our clergy as actually to go by the name of “Clergyman’s Sore Throat.” In aggravated cases, the sympathetic connection maintained between these muscles and those of the lips and front of the tongue where the work of articulation belongs, causes stuttering; and it was undoubtedly in order to break up this connection that Demosthenes, as every schoolboy knows, practiced with his mouth filled with pebbles. While thus curing his stammering, he necessarily developed also that strength and sweetness of tone, which are heard only where the organs of resonance and articulation are used properly.

Instead of filling the mouth with pebbles, there are other methods employed in our own day, which are the results of the experiments of physicians and teachers continued through many years. They consist of exercises very simple in themselves, but which differ according to the different requirements of different voices, or of different stages in the development of the same voices. Hence, the necessity of having some one who understands his business to take charge of elocutionary training, which, as Mr. Beecher is careful to say, “ought to be done under the best instructors.” I have frequently found students coming from schools or colleges where there was some tradition of elocutionary training but no instructor, who were practicing with the utmost scrupulousness and persistency, exercises whose only effects could be to confirm them in faults which it was of prime importance for them to overcome. They needed a teacher to show them both what to practice, and how to practice; for, at first, it is, for most, a physical impossibility to produce properly the combinations of sounds that they require. They needed a teacher, too, to keep them from practicing advanced exercises. Indeed, to effect this, is often the most difficult part of his task, inasmuch as elementary exercises are always monotonous, never otherwise than indirectly benefi-