

vember, 1856—the lambs averaging 55 lbs., the yearlings 76 lbs. They were all thin in flesh, but of a pretty large breed. I commence feeding them oil-meal at once, with good oat and barley straw, and increased their oil-meal to 12 ounces each per day, at which rate I continued until grass came. I fed no hay. (Lambs do not require so much as old sheep; I usually feed a pound each with straw to older sheep, or half a pound with good hay.) They were then turned to grass; and in two weeks after, I began retailing the best of the two-year-olds to the butchers in the neighboring villages, at from \$7.25 to \$8 each; and in that way I sold all the two-year-olds but four, which, with the yearlings, I have still. I weighed them some three months ago, after shutting them up fourteen hours without food or water, and they averaged over 132½ lbs. I have no doubt but they now average over 140 lbs. I am feeding nearly half a pound of oil-cake meal and nearly half a pound of oats each per day.

Now, any man of common capacity can see at once that the better they are fed the better they pay. I paid only \$2 each for them, and thought them a hard bargain at that, as there were one-third more lambs than yearlings. They sheared nearly five pounds of wool each; and had they been in good condition in the fall, I have no doubt they would have shorn one or two pounds more each. I offered to pay the shearers by the number of ticks they might find—that is, to give six cents for each tick, as compensation for shearing; but there were no ticks found.

Now, Messrs. Editors, if farmers will keep sheep to propagate ticks, I am not to blame, for, several times I have given such advice through the agricultural papers.

In conclusion, I would add, that high feeding, high manuring, and reasonably deep tillage, are the only means of improving the wretchedly-abused soil of Western New York; and sooner or later it must be done, or the result will be disastrous; and it must begin with high feeding. I have all my farm drained, of course. I had nearly lost sight of that very important part, which, if not already begun, should commence at the same time as high feeding. I can not believe that any farmer can begin either and look back until he has done all he can do. I write what I know I have fully proved, and I know it is the only true course for the farmer's own good as well as that of his country.

J. J.

SIR,—Now, although I entertain the greatest respect for the opinions of the writer, as I am aware that he was always considered very high authority on agricultural matters, and whose numerous articles in the *Genesee Farmer* I never failed to find both interesting and instructive, yet I cannot say that my experience agrees with his in regard to ticks on sheep, my sheep are always well fed and well housed in winter, fed under cover, yet I find it necessary to use something in the shape of tick destroyer. Last fall I went over them all with Millers', and used nearly double the quantity stated in the directions, and still I find that they are not entirely free from ticks. I always commence feeding grain in the fall as soon as the grass begins to fail, and continue to all through the winter, or in other words, I always calculate to keep my sheep in good condition. As I find from experience, like Mr. Johnson, that they pay well for the grain that they consume, far better than taking the grain to market and selling it. In fact in my experience keeping sheep is the most profitable branch of farming. It may be that there was something in the oil-cake fed by Mr. J. that kept the ticks off his sheep. I have had no experience with oil-cake, but would like to hear what the experience of others has been in regard to feeding it to sheep. I generally feed peas in the straw through the winter, and towards spring clover hay. This winter I fed nearly ½ lb of oats to each per day in addition, as the peas were a poor crop last year, and, although they are in good condition, yet at shearing time I am afraid it would not be advisable for me to make a similar offer to that made by Mr. Johnston to the shearers. Namely, to them as their hire six cents for each tick they would find.

The soil and climate of Ontario seems to be well adapted to the raising of long woolled sheep. They are almost entirely free from the many troublesome complaints to which they are so liable in the old country, requiring the constant care of the shepherd, and I think that we Canadians possess advantages in this line that brother Jonathan can scarcely boast of either, and were we alive to our own interests we would go more fully into sheep, and raise more of such crops as roots, peas and

clover, and by so doing keep up, and in many instances restore the fertility of thousand of acres of land that is fast becoming run out. J. L. Aughrim P. O.

SPRING SHOW AND STOCK FAIR.—The Directors of the East Riding of Elgin Agricultural Society intend holding a Spring Show in St. Thomas on the 18th of April. A Stock Fair is also to be held at the same time. We hear that reduced rates are to be allowed by railroad companies. This is another step in the right direction.

The cattle dealers of Guelph and vicinity have formed a society and subscribed a capital of \$100,000 for the purpose of buying cattle for the European markets. Some 2,760 head are already bespoken in Wellington county, and they purpose securing in all 5,000 heavy animals by the middle of May.



How to Sing a Song.

BY WILLIAM M. CUMMINGS.

"Since singing is so good a thing,
I wish all men would learn to sing."

These doggerel lines, affixed by William Byrd to some songs published 300 years ago, are applicable to our times. The author gives the following brief reasons for persuading every one to learn to sing:—

- "1. It is a knowledge easily taught and quickly learnt, where there is a good master and an apt scholar.
- "2. The exercise of singing is delightful to nature, and good to preserve the health of man.
- "3. It doth strengthen all parts of the breast, and doth open the pipes.
- "4. It is a singular good remedy for a stuttering and stammering in the speech.
- "5. It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation, and to make a good orator.
- "6. It is the only way to know where nature hath bestowed the benefit of a good voice, which gift is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand that hath it; and in many that excellent gift is lost, because they want art to express nature.
- "7. There is not any music of instruments whatsoever comparable to that which is made of the voices of men, where the voices are good, and the same well-sorted and ordered.
- "8. The better the voice is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith; and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end."

Quaintly as this is put by Master Byrd, one cannot help thinking of Shakespeare's dictum, "Much virtue in it." Of course, if an apt scholar under a good master, the result is a foregone conclusion; but believing as I do that 999 out of 1,000 people may have passably fair voices, and sufficient natural musical capacity to be able to experience a never-fading delight and solace in the exercise of singing, if properly directed, I propose to say a few words on the subject of "How to sing a song." I choose the word song as an inclusive term, which may be very readily understood to embrace sacred or secular song or ballad, the one condition being that the composition is some ditty for a single voice, which can be sung with accompaniment, and in some instances without; for it must not be forgotten that a great number of our old-fashioned songs, including those of Dibdin, were originally intended to be sung without the extraneous aid of an instrumental accompaniment of any kind.

It may serve to encourage those who are not gifted with silver voices and nightingale throats, to be reminded that many of our best exponents of song have possessed but insignificant physical powers, and have therefore acquired their fame and celebrity by dint of persevering vocal study and mental cultivation; and it is also equally true that many singers in every age, endowed with the most exquisite voices, have wholly failed to command attention or to ravish the ears and hearts of the listening throng, simply because they lacked refinement and cultivation. Rossini was once asked what were the requisite qualifications to make a singer, and it is said that he answered, "Three—a voice, and a voice, and it is said that he answered, 'Three—a voice, and a voice, and a voice.'" This was of course true so far as it went, for without some capital or foundation to commence with, progress would be impossible. I, however, very much doubt whether the young of either sex are ever wholly deficient of musical ability; certainly our ordinary and common observation abundantly demonstrates that the voiceless are extremely rare. Of course, if people live through the bloom of youth and the prime of life without ever attempting to exercise their vocal faculties musically, they may possibly attain the unenviable condition of losing the desire and power of attempting to join in the concord of sweet sounds. Infants have naturally the powers of locomotion, but is it only from teaching and practical perseverance that they acquire the art of walking. If, then, you have never taken the first steps in singing, and are anxious to try your powers, you will find nothing more simple or more improving than a slow scale of eight sounds, sung gently, ascending and descending. Commence on some sound easily produced, and be careful that neither the highest nor the lowest sound needs any strain or undue effort. The voice must grow naturally like a plant up-

wards and downwards, and it is folly to force it in either direction.

In considering the question "How to sing a song," the primary difficulty is in the choice. People go to a concert and hear some popular singer vocalise a song, perhaps a good one, and not impossibly a very bad one; and forgetful of the fact that the singer, with reputation at stake, has been studying for weeks how to "make the song go down," the listener is pleased, thinks it easy and effective, and believes that it is only necessary to buy the song and sing it, and produce an equally favorable result. How often is this done, and how often does disappointment ensue!

In choosing a song, select something with at least sensible words; the better and more interesting they are, the greater will be your chance of success. Be careful to get a song wholly within your vocal powers, for if you attempt something too high or too low you will probably subject yourself to ridicule. Having chosen your song, study the words carefully that you may fully comprehend the sense and sentiment; popular singers make it a practice to learn the words by heart—a habit worthy of all commendation and imitation. When you thoroughly understand the words, you may attempt them in conjunction with the tune or music, and in doing so endeavour to arrange breathing places; these should be fixed so as to aid the sense, or at least not to mar the meaning and intent of the poetry. When you have decided where to take breath, mark the place with a pencil, and be careful in studying to observe these marks. As a general rule, unless a phrase of the poetry commences with the first beat of the music bar, we shall find that a bad place for breathing.

Many singers never dream of pre-arranging the places for taking breath, and this fact alone would suffice to account for much of the bad singing we hear. In one of Horsley's glees the bass voice has to sing alone the line, "Mista! black terrific maid;" and when the vocalist, as frequently happens, takes breath after "black" instead of after "Mista," the effect is truly comical, making the line sound like "Mr. Black, terrific maid."

Every word should be pronounced distinctly, even more so than in ordinary conversation. We sometimes miss the aspirate "h" when listening to a careless reader, but the loss is felt with greater force when words are allied to music. I have heard a line from "The Bailiff's Daughter of Ilington" sound like "Before I give you a penny sweet-tart," simply because the singer had forgotten to give fully the "h" in "sweet heart." Again, the letter "r," which we English almost ignore in common talk, should certainly be observed in singing. How otherwise are we to know, in such a song as "The Message," what is meant on the long holding notes by the word "farthing?" The absence of the "r," as too commonly sung, produces "father." These remarks as to the words have all been made in reference to English. Of course we ought not to attempt any other language before we know that we have acquired a proper control over its special pronunciation and accent, and then we should be careful to acquaint ourselves with the meaning and sentiment of the words before we venture to sing them for others to hear, and possibly to criticise.

So much for the words; we now turn to the music, and the first caution we have to give is as to singing the notes in their integrity, not only as regards pitch and intonation, but also as regards the length of the individual sounds. A familiar instance of the unconcerned manner in which a popular song is often murdered occurs to me. The charming melody from the opera Faust, "Quando a te lieta," is a great favourite with young ladies, but not one in ten sings it correctly. To produce the effect intended by the composer, Gounod, each note should be made exactly the length indicated to the text; but almost invariably the fair vocalists introduce numberless dots after the notes, thereby destroying all the charm of the song. Turns, cadences, shakes, and trills should not be introduced into music. The day for the display of musical fireworks is past—at least for a time; fashion, in its strange turnings, may bring them back again, but that will certainly not be for long years to come. Ornaments and embellishments which have been inserted by the composer should be practised until they can be accomplished perfectly and with ease.

All the marks of expression in the song should be carefully observed and regulated, from the softest piano to the loudest forte, remembering never to allow the latter to degenerate into a shout. In singing, the golden rule as to tone should be "quality, not quantity."

Something must be said about the accompaniment for a song. We may take it, as a rule, that this will be played on the domestic orchestra, the pianoforte; and probably the singer will need to play his or her own accompaniment, and therefore has a great danger, for many a tolerably correct and pleasing vocalist utterly ruins the song and singing by injudicious, and perhaps false and vicious, accompaniment. It is indispensable that the accompaniment of a song should be studied and mastered quite independently of the song or melody. When this is accomplished, the two may be practised together, care being taken that the harmonies set down are not added to or altered in any way, and still greater care that the right foot be kept away from what is commonly called the loud pedal. This should not be touched excepting by thoroughly efficient pianists, for if it be held down during the transition from one harmony to another, the effect is somewhat similar to that produced by a school-boy who, immediately he has finished writing a copy, wipes it all over with his sleeve. The last but not the least important requisite of "How to sing a song" is nerve. If the singer allows nervousness to get the mastery, it is impossible that the song can be well sung. Of course, some degree of nervousness is natural and desirable, as evidence that the vocalist possesses both soul and sensibility; but nervousness must be controlled, and the best antidote against it is the consciousness that the singer has well studied the song, and knows that he or she can render it competently and correctly; and I may add that the singer must not be discouraged if the first attempt at singing a well-studied song should not prove as successful as it ought to have done. The second trial will probably right matters; the mottoes, "perseverance," and "try, try again," are as applicable to singing as to all other undertakings. I cannot better conclude than by recording a tradition of John Bartleman, the most celebrated singer of the last century. He was described as "small of stature, but a leviathan in intellect," and it is said, used to declare that he "never sang a song in his life before the public until he had studied it, the words more especially, for twelve months." We may allow for the gradual exaggeration of the story by passing from one narration to another, and also something for the slow pace of olden days; but even then the anecdote gives us a hint which we ought not to be too dull to profit by.