

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD DICTION TO SINGERS

How often the jesting remark is heard concerning a singer, "Well, was he supposed to be singing English, French, German or Italian?"

A joke—yes—but too often this remark does not arise from the speaker's lack of knowledge concerning the languages mentioned, rather from the faulty diction of the singer.

It is indeed a sad state of affairs when an English speaking citizen finds it difficult to recognize his native language when it is being sung by a fellow countryman.

Probably enough words are recognizable to make it possible for one with a vivid imagination to understand what the song is about. Why should only the imaginative few be thus privileged? Why should not all listeners be able to sit back in comfort, rather than on the edge of the seat, straining their ears to catch an intelligible word.

There are ways by which good diction may be acquired. First—practice speaking distinctly. Talk rather slowly making the vowel sound plain and biting off the consonants clearly.

This should not be done fifteen minutes a day and then forgotten, but, in every remark, the aim should be to speak so clearly that no one will find it necessary to say, "Pardon me, I did not understand you."

"But," says the singer, "talking words clearly is entirely different from singing them so."

The reason often given is that some words cannot be sung clearly without sacrificing beauty of tone.

How many people who attend recitals and concerts in which singers take part are competent judges of tone production? Probably very few.

On the other hand practically everyone present can be given enjoyment, if the singer enunciates distinctly in whatever language he may be singing.

Further—it has been found by practical experiment that if the art of enunciating is properly understood and carefully