WHY MUSIC MAY BE A LUXURY FEW CAN AFFORD

An Item in the High Cost of Living That Has Far Reaching Results.

A FEW years from now there will be no more singers produced in New York City, unless the vocal teachers stop putting up their prices," said a social student who had been making a round of the vocal studios in town.

"In all this discussion of the high cost of living," she went on, "there has been not a word about music; and, you know, there are so many of us who simply cannot exist without it. Even now the man of wealth may do without it, but we cannot. We must have something to afford to pay the singing master's fee, which comes to about the same figure as his rent. When a New York operatic en- gager singing lessons for his daughter or son it is about the same as though he had to pay it for his rent.

Time was when the middle-class dweller on Manhattan Island could take his son or daughter to the opera at a nominal price, and there the family to the studio without fear of bankruptcy. But that good time is of the past. To-day the young man who would like to study vocal culture after office hours, and work out in the steps of a Bliapham, has scarcely the ghost of a chance. There are settlement movements in the training of the very poor and studios wide open for the rich. It is the man or woman of moderate in- come who is really up against it.

The social student drew forth a small notebook, which she had jotted down her observations in the course of a day spent among the studios; and began to read extracts as follows:

"Vocal teachers in New York City, like Caesar's 'Gallic,' are divided in parties. There is the hard-talking party, who will not teach singing from start to finish, so you can't grade them like school teachers. You classify them according to the price they charge for lessons.

"Division No. 1. I call those in the first division the Double Eagle Professors, because their price is $20 an hour or over. They usually live in style, keep secretaries, give recitals every year, and have their pictures exhibited wherever and whenever possible. No doubt they teach well. At any rate, they have acquired big reputations in one way or another, and their pupils have to pay for all this. They do pay, and from all appearances feel honored in so doing.

"It is not so easy to see any of the pupils of the Double Eagle. They are extremely busy, but you may talk with their secretaries, and, sometimes, if you are lucky, you may catch a glimpse of one of them through a crack or half-open door. If, in your mad quest to cultivate your voice, you feel a little Turkish, you shall, that, perhaps, you haven't a voice to cultivate, the Double Eagle greatly will arrange an audience for you; for when a trifling $5 you may have the counsel of the Double Eagle himself, who will hear you sing and advise you regarding your failed genius; and they hardly ever speak of themselves as representatives of any of the well-known singing methods, for that has gone out of fashion. The teacher who formerly advocated the Italian method, or the Marchahl method, who talked of Lamperti, William Shakespeare, or Julius Hey, has vanished from New York City.

"These methods are unaltered as ever, only they are not labeled. It's like the homeopath who drops a lot of different drugs in the tea, and tell you, you never know what you have been tak- ing. I have escaped from the Double Eagle, and yet never talk about method, you know, as I can't do to the subject nowadays. All the Eagles can give you the names of noted singers in concert, or opera, who are not their pupils. They are not overford of displaying their own likenesses, but some of them decorate their studio walls with pictures of their successful pupils, singers and opera folk.

"They make you feel at home, and you would like to engage lessons with them. If undecided, however, you may attend their pupils' recitals or call again. Some require payment for a term of less than a year, and many make you a truly correct judge of your capabilities and future, guided by their own or correct methodists, others can read your fate after a single hearing.

"Division No. 3 includes those vocal professors whose price is less than $10 an hour. This class is not yet sufficiently well known to have earned an appellation. It contains any of those distinctive characteristics shown by the preceding classes; and each member of this division must be judged on his own merits as an individual.

"In a resumé of this description, where empirical knowledge and observation have led to the deductions herein contained, it is necessary to observe the vocal stu- dents of New York City and their char- acteristics; for it may easily be seen that the pupils of this city may be divided into separate groups, just as their teach- ers are. I do not differentiate them because the majority of the students as primary, elementary, and advanced, but according to the price paid each lesson. I shall call the pupils of the Pro- fessors Double Eagle, Students Double Eagle; and, for convenience, the $10 pu- pil will be designated as Students Eagle. The characteristics of these pupils are quite as marked and as distinct from each other as those of the teachers themselves.

"Student Double Eagle, for example, are all wearing their summer mil-