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Frederick Matthias Alexander in Beechworth, VIC., Australia, December 1896 — January 1897

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Retired Dr. mult. Jeroen Staring taught mathematics at secondary schools in The Netherlands. His 2005 Medical Sciences dissertation describes the life, work, and technique of F. Matthias Alexander. In 2013 he successfully defended a second dissertation, on the early history of the NYC Bureau of Educational Experiments.

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Abstract:

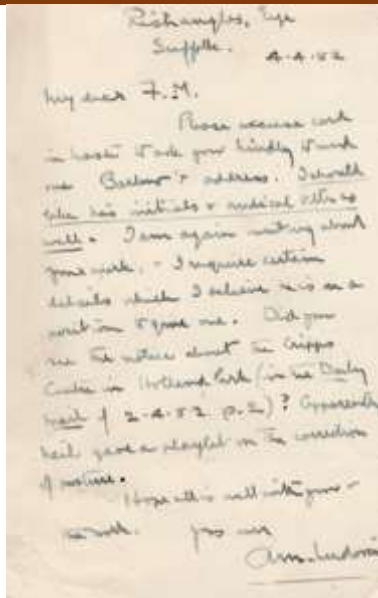
This case study describes the visit of Frederick Matthias Alexander, the future founder of the so-called Alexander Technique, to the town of Beechworth in the northern part of the state of Victoria, Australia, in late 1896 and early 1897. He lectured on his breathing and speech methods, gave lessons in them, and gave recitals at entertainment evenings organized with his former student Mrs. Edith Young, who first used her stage name 'Miss Edith Tasca-Page' at Beechworth. It becomes clear that Alexander used special advertising techniques learned from memory experts 'Professor Alphonse Loiset' and Charles Edwin Jones; that his "methods" were limited to speech and breathing, and that the first half of 1897 presented great challenges for him, which he met in very idiosyncratic ways.

Keywords: *Edith Mary Parsons (Page) Young (1865-1938; stage name since December 1896: Miss Edith Tasca-Page). Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955); Charles Edwin Jones (1828-1903); Marcus Dwight Larrowe (1820-1896) — aka "Professor" Alphonse Loiset; Robert Forbes Young (1856-1910). Beechworth, VIC.*

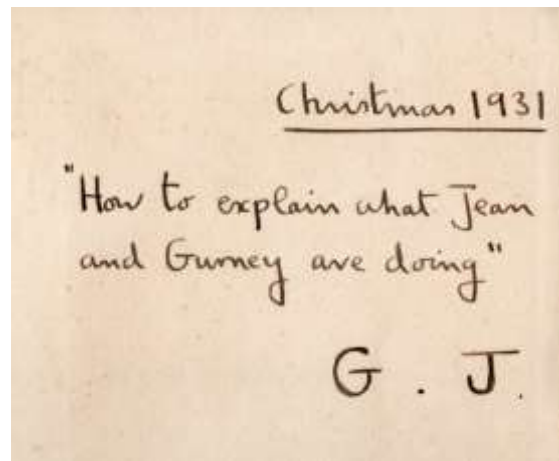
Introduction

Let no one imagine [...] that the path of the student of the correct use of the self is strewn with roses. Let no one suppose that he can take it up as a pleasant pastime, like golf, bridge, or chess. It is in many respects the most exacting and at the same time the most humiliating experience a man can undergo. (Ludovici, 1933, p. 125).

On April 4, 1952, conservative author and eugenicist Anthony M. Ludovici (Stone, 2002) sent a postcard to fellow author and eugenicist F. Matthias Alexander, asking for some information, stating that he was writing again about Alexander's work (see *Figure 1*). Ludovici meant the so-called Alexander Technique that Alexander taught at the time, "an instruction method for observing sensory-motor habits that are usually sub-conscious and implementing strategies for bringing them under more conscious control, to the extent that that is possible, and changing them when that is deemed appropriate" (Staring, 2005, p. 1). Ludovici had previously published on Alexander's work and ideas, for example in his 1927 work *Man: An Indictment* and in his 1945's *The Four Pillars of Health: A Contribution to Post-War Planning* (see *Note 1*). After Alexander published his book *The Use of the Self*, with the long subtitle *Its Conscious Direction in Relation to Diagnosis, Functioning and the Control of Reaction*, Ludovici (1933) wrote *Health and Education through Self-Mastery*, a book intended to clarify Alexander's work and to explain and translate Alexander's terminology in *The Use of the Self* into a more understandable and more accessible English.



Richmond, Va
 Suffolk. 4-4-52
 My dear F.M.,
 Please excuse and
 in haste I ask you kindly to send
 me Alexander's address. I shall
 then be initiated in medical studies
 with - I am again writing about
 your work. - I require certain
 details which I believe are in a
 position to give me. Did you
 see the notice about the Gurney
 Center in Portland, Ore. in the Daily
 News of 2-4-52 (p. 2)? Apparently
 he had been played on the condition
 of nature.
 I hope this will help you -
 with your own
 Alexander



Christmas 1931
 "How to explain what Jean
 and Gurney are doing"
 G. J.

Figure 1: Message on postcard dated April 4, 1952, written by Anthony M. Ludovici to F. Matthias Alexander. (Jeroen Staring Collection). **Figure 2:** Dedication by Jean and Gurney MacInnes dated Christmas 1931, in an undated copy of *The Use of the Self* by F. M. Alexander. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

Earlier, at some point in 1931, Jean MacInnes and her brother Gurney purchased a copy of the undated preprint of *The Use of the Self* in which, in the first chapter entitled 'Evolution of a Technique,' Alexander recounted his difficult struggle with loss of voice during stage performances some 40 years earlier in his life. (Note that when or even whether the struggle Alexander described actually occurred remains unclear and undocumented with evidence going back to the 1890s). Other chapters deal with the use of Alexander's methods in playing golf and in the treatment of stuttering. In the concluding chapter, Alexander criticized medical methods of diagnosis and argued that his methods "should be incorporated into medical training" (Alexander, Preprint 1931, p. 105). Jean and Gurney MacInnes possibly gave their purchased copy of the book as a Christmas gift to their parents and provided it with a dedication: "How to explain what Jean and Gurney are doing" (see Figure 2). Both had previously begun training with Alexander in 1931, along with six others, to become teachers of what Alexander in *The Use of the Self* claimed to have invented in the 1890s and had been teaching ever since.

From the above opening quotation from Ludovici to this introductory paragraph, it can be inferred that it was no easy task to learn or even understand Alexander's methods by taking lessons from him or by reading his *The Use of the Self*. From one of the many notes that Gurney MacInnes wrote in a copy of *The Use of the Self* that he had received from Alexander in 1932 (see Note 2), it is clear that part of the problem that Ludovici addressed lay in Alexander's apparent intention to make his methods appear medical-therapeutic: "There is much in this book to make people think that the work is primarily 'curative' or 'medical'" (G. MacInnes in Ikeda (Ed.), 2024, p. 1). This remark seems to point to an old habit of Alexander, because early in his career he already claimed to have cured many people. He stated in advertisements in New Zealand in 1895 that curing stuttering was a specialty of his (Staring, 2021). A year later he declared that he had also cured his clients' stammering (e.g. Alexander, 1896a; compare Alexander, n.d., pp. 22-24). Given that he four decades later devoted an entire chapter in *The Use of the Self* to how his methods can be applied to stutterers, it is actually striking that among the thousands of newspaper and magazine articles, books, and other publications that have appeared to date on Alexander's methods, only a handful of texts so far deal with applications of his methods in stuttering and conducting research on them (see Note 3).

It is interesting to note in this light that when Alexander stayed in Australia from 1896 to 1904, he also advertised bold claims about curing diseases and ailments (Staring, 2021). For example, two months after Alexander had performed on Friday 11th September, 1896, at an entertainment in aid of the Horsham and Mercantile Cricket Club at the Mechanics' Hall, Horsham, Victoria (*Horsham Times*, 1896), and exactly one week after he had, through somewhat thoughtless actions, placed himself at the mercy of the press, by

sending a letter to the editor of the Melbourne *Champion* for which he was immediately punished by cynical journalism (*Champion*, 1896; see *Note 4*), an immense advertisement placed by Alexander appeared on December 12 in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, a newspaper published in Beechworth in the north of the state of Victoria, which read, among other things, “In Melbourne Mr. Alexander has cured numerous cases of Stuttering, Defects of Voice, and Throat Troubles arising from errors in vocalisation.”

The huge advertisement was designed to immediately grab the attention of the newspaper-reading public. It told of Alexander’s “New Methods of Vocal Culture and Breathing Gymnastics;” that he could “claim as students two gentlemen of world-wide repute, Professor Loissette and Mr. Frederic Villiers” and other well-known people; that his methods are easily learned by anyone; and that since he was leaving for America in early 1897, it would be “the only opportunity to learn these wonderful methods, which will be imparted by a series of lectures and class teachings. The first Lecture will be given at 8 o’clock on Monday evening, Dec. 14th, in Wissenden’s Commercial Room. Special arrangements may be made for private tuition and private classes.” The advertisement further states that Alexander would visit Bright, a neighboring town, on December 17th. And of course, Alexander did not forget to mention that a full course would cost £2 2s. On the other hand, “Copies of the New Treatise, ‘The Cultivation of the Singing and Speaking Voice,’ may be procured at the office of this paper, Loch-street, Beechworth, Free of Charge.” The ad ended with testimonials from a number of Melbourne’s leading figures and two singers (Alexander, 1896c; see *Note 5*).

Alexander’s Advertising

The same issue of the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* also carried two articles about Alexander, most likely advertorials written and paid for by Alexander himself (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896ab). Both writings contain much the same ‘content’ as Alexander’s advertisement (see *Note 6*). From these three texts in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* of Saturday, December 12, 1896, we can immediately infer and conclude a number of things.

Alexander advertised in a curious and striking way. He placed a very large advertisement which in fact completely eclipsed advertisements of others in the same advertising column. Two short articles, most probably advertorials, placed elsewhere in the newspaper, supported what was offered in the advertisement that announced that he would give lectures and class teachings on his methods of improving breathing and speech. This seems a trivial subject for lectures and class teachings today, but in the late nineteenth century many people in cities such as Melbourne — nicknamed ‘*Smellbourne*’ — but also in the countryside suffered from respiratory ailments and diseases ranging from frequent colds, smog and smoke pollution to pulmonary tuberculosis — and worse. Alexander could therefore count on a nice influx of interested people who perhaps also needed a distraction in a world without much entertainment, radio, TV, computers, smartphones. It was further stated that Alexander was a specialist in his field; that he had developed new methods of “Vocal Culture and Breathing Gymnastics;” that he had had two world-famous people as students of his methods, including ‘Professor’ Loissette; that he had cured many people of all kinds of respiratory diseases and ailments and that he would be leaving for America in a two months (one of the two advertorials states the end of February 1897 and that before his departure he planned to visit the main country cities of Victoria). Furthermore, Alexander’s ‘systems’ would be *easy to learn*, and improved breathing would become automatic. And lastly, rest assured, ‘The Human Voice,’ one of two texts about Alexander in the December 12 issue of the newspaper explicitly stated that his methods were “natural ones” (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896b; see *Note 6*) An excerpt from Reverend Jones’ testimony in Alexander’s advertisement in the newspaper of that day already emphasized that Alexander’s breathing method was “the most natural, philosophical, and effective” that Jones had tried and that it “should be universally known” (Alexander, 1896c; see *Note 5*). In ‘The Human Voice’ text in the newspaper the word “natural” is even used three times to emphasize its importance. This article is almost certainly an advertorial, as it bears a striking resemblance to advertisements Alexander had placed in Melbourne and Ballarat newspapers earlier in 1896 (Staring, 2021). It gave information and advertisement for his speech and breathing lessons, already commented upon above: “Mr. F. M. Alexander, who is at present on a visit to Beechworth, is a high authority in regard to these matters, and the system of breathing he imparts is easily

acquired, and taking breath in singing and speaking becomes automatic. "In an earlier case study, I showed that after meeting memory expert Marcus Dwight Larrowe, also known as "Professor Loisetete" (see *Note 7*), in July 1895 in Auckland, New Zealand, Alexander adopted Loisetete's marketing strategy. Loisetete was touring the world at the time, giving lectures and promoting his memory training method through introductory lectures, classes and booklets (the contents of which had to be kept secret by Loisetete's clientele).

Loisetete clearly was an accomplished lecturer who had learned the skill to grab the attention of his audience. It seems that wherever he went he widely marketed his 'Assimilative Memory.' In fact, he was a master at marketing not only his memory system, but himself, his skills, his 'craftmanship.' He glorified himself immensely, making clever use of the opinion of others about him, of famous persons [...]. Given the circumstances at the time, Loisetete's ads and advertorials were provocative; he placed extremely large advertisements and advertorials in numerous newspapers of the cities where he stayed. He allowed himself to be interviewed by the press. Wherever he came, he would launch a barrage of (sizable) advertisements at his intended audience. He was a smart thoughtful marketing strategist. (Staring, 2021, p. 45).

In an advertisement in the *Auckland Star*, Alexander quoted a testimonial he had received from Loisetete after he had taught him his methods. Loisetete wrote, "I had tried the remedies of two distinguished elocutionists elsewhere, but with no benefit. In *three* lessons Mr. Alexander set me right" (Loisetete in Alexander, 1895; see also Alexander, n.d., p. 19). From Loisetete's words it seems true that Alexander's methods could be learned easily, in an *extremely* short time. Alexander did indeed advertise this while he was in New Zealand and in the months afterwards in Melbourne and Ballarat (Staring, 2021). In the first ad he placed in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, mentioned above, he stated, "The systems are easily acquired by all." This means that in fact Loisetete would have completely 'mastered' Alexander's method after just three lessons. This is of course in stark contrast to what Ludovici later related about Alexander's method in his book *Health and Education through Self-Mastery*. At least as important is the comment in the ad that improved breathing would become automatic, that is, would last.

Unfortunately, 'The Cultivation of the Singing and Speaking Voice,' the treatise that Alexander's ad said was available free from the newspaper office in Beechworth, is no longer available. It is likely that all copies have been lost. So, we cannot consult the text to see exactly what Alexander offered as his "new methods" and "systems." On one of the first occasions Alexander advertised the pamphlet, on April 2, 1896, in Melbourne, he wrote that it dealt with the following topics: "Voice Production, Natural Elocution, Dramatic Training, The Art of Proper Breathing, The Cure of Defective Voices, Stammering, &c." (Alexander 1896a). And an advertisement he placed in the *Melbourne Punch* a month before he left Melbourne for Beechworth stated that he taught breathing gymnastics, which "prevent gasping, raising shoulders, and taking air through mouth" and that "members of the medical profession" recommended his breathing gymnastics "as a health giver and *for cure of* Chest Troubles, *Consumption* [= pulmonary tuberculosis; J.S.], &c." (Alexander, 1896b; italics J.S.). In September 1896 the *Melbourne Punch* published the following text on Alexander's activities, which may be a summary of his treatise (note that it may also be an advertorial by Alexander himself):

The aim of the singer or speaker should be to acquire perfect control of the vocal organ and breathing apparatus. Then may the voice be quickly developed to the fullest extent. Mr. F. M. Alexander, studio, 49 Elizabeth-street, cultivates the voice by new methods, and the splendid results achieved in his first term in this city are most gratifying. He states that he can impart methods which will enable a student to gain complete control in breathing and vocalisation in one term, and we have before us copies of testimonials from well-known ladies and gentlemen of Melbourne in support of his statement. Singers are enthusiastic in regard to the case in singing and taking breath after a few lessons, and are astonished at the improvement in the range, power and tone of their voices after a single course. Included in the breathing course for singers is the exercise by which a celebrated operatic singer gained that marvellous power over the breath for which he was so noted. The expert has successfully removed throat troubles of all descriptions caused by the wrong use of the voice and breathing organs in singers and speakers, and has cured numerous cases of stammering, &c., &c. His breathing-gymnastics are being studied by members of the medical profession of Melbourne, who recommend the system to cases of chest disorders, consumption, &c. Mr. Alexander's chest development in

connection with vocal use is said to be wonderful, due solely to the special methods he adopts. The Rev. Handel Jones, Congregational Manse, Williamstown, states that he has derived marvellous benefits from a health point of view by acquiring the methods of breathing and chest development imparted by Mr. Alexander. (*Melbourne Punch*, 1896, p. 7).

Two months later the *Bendigo Advertiser* (1896) reviewed the treatise with the following line: “‘The Cultivation of the Speaking and Singing Voice,’ by Mr. F. M. Alexander, will be found instructive by public speakers, elocutionists and vocalists.”

All this can only mean that Alexander was merely teaching breathing and speech at that time and was *not* teaching the so-called ‘technique’ that he described in his book *The Use of the Self* as having invented at some point in the 1890s and for which he became known from the mid-1920s onwards.

Loisette left New Zealand for Australia in mid-1895 (to teach his memory training in Sydney and other cities in New South Wales), and from there to America, where he died in San Francisco on February 5, 1896 (see *Note 7*). Both men never met again. On December 12, 1896, Alexander (1896c) wrote in his ad in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, “As he leaves for America early next year, this will be the only opportunity of acquiring these splendid methods.” One of the two advertorials mentioned above stated “end of February” of that year, which would mean that Alexander would leave Australia within two months. Perhaps he had arranged with Loisette that he would visit him in America (see *Note 8*)? If so, did he not know that Loisette had died in early 1896, shortly after his arrival in San Francisco? Or was this a marketing ploy to indicate that one had to decide quickly to take lessons, because otherwise he would no longer be in the country? That would correspond to a marketing ploy that Loisette often used (Staring, 2021).

Another person Alexander met in Auckland was ex-politician Charles Edwin Jones (see *Illustrated Adelaide Post*, 1868; *Illustrated Australian News*, 1868) who at the time earned his living by giving lectures on all sorts of subjects (see *Note 9*). Since March 1895 Jones travelled around New Zealand, lecturing in the major cities. It is possible that Alexander, Loisette and Jones met through Percy R. Dix, their mutual impresario in Auckland (Staring, 2021; see *Note 10*). Jones and Loisette left New Zealand for Sydney on the same steamer on August 7, 1895. Jones was to become Loisette’s “advance agent” in Australia. Not long after the voyage Jones decided against being Loisette’s aid and travelled to Melbourne where he designed and started selling *Memory Culture*, his own memory training method. He copied Loisette’s self-marketing strategy as well: placing large advertisements and advertorials in newspapers, giving introductory lectures, teaching his method, and selling *Memory Culture: class book*, a book about his method, the contents of which had to remain secret, just as Loisette demanded of those who bought his booklets (see *Note 11*). He advertised his memory training in his treatise *Memory Culture: Mnemonics and Mnemotechney* (Jones, n.d. 2) which included on the inner side of the front cover the warm recommendation from Alexander,

I thank you most sincerely, for the instruction I have received in your admirable system of Memory Culture, which meets and covers my case, better than any other of the many systems I have tested. I like it, because it is not an artificial or merely Mnemonic method, but an actual development of Natural Memory. I am sure that thousands will gladly avail themselves of the facilities you afford, for the employment of natural memory. (Alexander in Jones, n.d., p. 2).

In Melbourne, Alexander and Jones shared teaching rooms called ‘The Studio’ in room 9 on the 4th Floor of the ‘Australian Buildings’ on Elizabeth Street.

It appears that both Alexander and Jones have used Loisette’s marketing strategy to promote themselves and their offerings, Jones to market his *Memory Culture* and Alexander his ‘New Methods’ to improve speech and breathing.



Figure 3: Porch of former London Tavern, Beechworth, VIC. (Photo © J. Staring, 2024). Figure 4: Yard and outbuildings of former London Tavern, Beechworth, VIC. (Photo © J. Staring, 2024).

More advertising in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*

A week after Alexander's first advertisement appeared in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, a second one appeared, this time not too large, nor with too much information. The advertisement was for a performance Alexander was to give at Beechworth Town Hall (see *Figure 7*; see *Note 12*) on New Year's Eve 1896. It said that Alexander would appear in a unique entertainment, consisting of gaiety, pathos, sensation and song. Further, a "charming dramatic artist" called Miss Edith Tasca-Page would assist him, as would local Beechworth singers. Finally, it said that Alexander would take students "for the week following his appearance," so the first week of 1897 (Alexander, 1896d; see *Note 13*).

Interestingly, the ad said "Miss Edith Tasca-Page" would be performing with Alexander. "Miss Edith Tasca-Page" was the stage name of stage artist Edith Mary Parsons (Page) Young (see *Figure 6*). The name "Miss Edith Tasca-Page" first appeared in print in this Alexander advertisement, dated December 19, 1896. Edith Young was not a Miss but was married to Tasmanian government clerk Robert Forbes Young — in his spare time pianist, composer of songs and entertainer (see *Figure 5*). Young, for example, composed 'Don't tell the girls' (*Mercury*, 1892; Young, 1892). After a period as a solicitors' clerk and employment with the Lands Titles Office, he had become a clerk at the Hobart Police Court, a post he resigned around 1898 to become a full-time society entertainer in Melbourne and later in Sydney, together with his wife Edith and with Alexander.

Alexander had met the Young-couple earlier in Tasmania in 1894 when he was living in Hobart — giving lessons in breathing and speech. Since early June that year, Alexander (1894abcdef) advertised in *The Clipper* and in *The Mercury* that he would be organizing a performance "Under the Patronage of His Excellency the Governor, and Viscountess Gormanston" at Hobart Town Hall on June 25. In several of these advertisements he stated that Edith would be performing on stage too. For example, on June 22 he stated that he would be assisted by "Mrs. Robert Young" and others, including Edith's husband Mr. "R. Young" (Alexander, 1894c). On June 23 he stated that "Mrs. R. Young" and "Miss E. Miller" would assist him during the entertainment for "Monday Next," which means June 25th, and that the "two ladies appearing in [several] scenes, are Mr. Alexander's pupils" (Alexander, 1894de). And Alexander advertised on June 27 that there would be entertainment in the Town Hall on June 29, organized by him. I do not know if the entertainment was moved from the 25th to the 29th for some reason, or if Alexander provided entertainment on both nights. There are at least two reviews of the entertainment on June 29th. The *Clipper* (1894) reported in their review in early July 1894 on the performance at Hobart's Town Hall on June 29,

In the humorous recital Mr. Alexander introduced a pupil, Mrs. Robert Young, who as Lady Teazle shone to great advantage, her charming simplicity of manner gaining universal commendation, and hopes were freely expressed *that the first appearance of this talented little lady* would not be by any means her last. Mr. Alexander is to be congratulated upon the aptness of his pupil. (*Clipper*, 1894; italics J.S.).

Edith's husband also performed during the entertainment evening. The paper noted that the second part of the evening was opened by a "humorous sketch by Mr. Robert Young, who as usual received the lion's share of applause [...]. Bob Young is — Bob Young: unapproachable, comparable, redolent of music, and always Young" (*Clipper*, 1894). A review in the *Tasmanian News* (1894) noted that Mrs. Robert Young and Miss Miller "are pupils of Mr. Alexander, and they acquitted themselves in a manner that augured well for his success as a teacher of elocution," and, "In the second part Mr. Young appeared in his musical sketch, 'The silver wedding,' which fairly convulsed the audience and created considerable merriment. He was loudly applauded for his clever effort."

A review of Alexander's stage performance in August 1894 noted that Edith (again introduced simply as "Mrs. Robert Young" or even more simply "Mrs. Young), who also appeared on stage, was "one of the pupils of Mr. Alexander" (*Mercury*, 1894a). And a review in the *Mercury* (1894c) in December 1894 said that during a performance the previous evening Alexander had been assisted "by some of his pupils," including "Mrs. Robert Young." It was further stated that "Mr. Robert Young contributed one of his amusing musical sketches, *The Silver Wedding*" (*Mercury*, 1894b).

Bloch, in his biography of Alexander, mentions that Alexander met Edith and Robert Young for the first time around 1886, but did not refer to a source, or sources, for his statement (Bloch, 2004, p. 26-27). He may have had in mind that Alexander's great-niece Jackie Evans had written in her hagiography of Alexander — also without citing a source — that Robert Young "had performed in Waratah when [Alexander] was living there" (Evans, 2001, p. 105). Therefore, we can reasonably conclude that Alexander and the Young-couple most likely met in 1894 through Alexander's work, when he gave lessons in breathing and speech during his stay in Tasmania. Mind you, Edith Young was his pupil in 1894!



Figure 5: Robert F. Young. (Table Talk, 1990b). Figure 6: Edith Young. (Table Talk, 1900a).

Several texts about Alexander appeared in the December 19, 1896, edition of the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*. One of these was printed twice, on different pages. The first text, entitled 'New Year's Night,' states, among other things, that on the evening of Alexander's arrival at Beechworth (probably during his performance on Monday 14 December 1896, in Wissenden's Commercial Room in the London Tavern) the members of the Liedertafel had the honor of hearing him and that they were "in raptures with the items given." It was further stated that Alexander had been offered a "magnificent engagement" contract in America in December 1895 but had not accepted it because of his ill health. This passage in the text could mean that Alexander had indeed made an appointment with Loisetete, but the reason given in it why he has not yet left for America is questionable (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896c; see *Note 14*). Nearly the

same text of the second article, most probably an advertorial by Alexander, entitled ‘The Human Voice’ (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896d; see *Note 15*), was published in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* a week earlier (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896b; see above and *Note 6*). The third text, entitled ‘Vocal Culture,’ appeared on both page 4 (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896e; see *Note 16*) and page 8 (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896f; see *Note 16*) of the December 19, 1896, edition of the newspaper. It provided information about Alexander’s breathing lessons at Beechworth and directions for students at Bright. Apparently, Alexander had made appointments during his earlier announced visit to Bright on December 17 (see above) which he was unable to keep because he would not be able to visit Bright again; (prospective) students in Bright should write to him as advertised. Alexander seems to have made good use of his time at Beechworth, teaching speech and breathing, following his introductory lecture on Monday 14 December 1896 in Wissenden’s Commercial Room at the London Tavern, named after Henry John Wissenden, London Tavern licensee 1896-1899 (Hawley & Davidson, 1972; Hilderbrand, 2007; Paterson, 2009; *Figure 3* and *Figure 4*). The lessons probably went so well that he cancelled a second visit to Bright and asked Bright students to contact him for further action (in Beechworth).

Another week passed before the last Alexander advertisement of 1896 appeared — on Boxing Day (Alexander, 1896e; see *Note 17*). It has the same text as in Alexander’s advertisement of 19 December (Alexander, 1896d; see above and *Note 15*). The article about Alexander entitled ‘New Year’s Night’ that appeared in the newspaper that day (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896g; see *Note 18*) has the same text as an article that had appeared the week before (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896c; see *Note 14*). Yet another article, entitled ‘Unique Entertainment’ (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896h; see *Note 19*), again showing clear similarities with Alexander’s advertising style and wording, presented a sort of summary of the entertainment to be expected on New Year’s Eve (“for the first time for a Beechworth audience at the Town Hall”), praising Alexander and Miss Edith Tasca-Page, concluding with the announcement that some of Beechworth’s “best known vocalists” would assist in “an unusual programme.”



Figure 7: Town Hall, Beechworth, VIC. (Photo © J. Staring, 2024). Figure 8: Rotunda in Town Hall Gardens behind the Town Hall, Beechworth, VIC. (Photo © J. Staring, 2024). (See also Rose, ca. 1890- ca. 1900).

The first 1897 edition of the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* bore the date January 2, 1897. An extensive review of Alexander and Tasca-Page’s New Year’s Eve performance in the paper, entitled ‘Elocutionary and Musical Entertainment,’ shows that the evening Alexander had organized at Beechworth Town Hall had been well received by the audience (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897a; see *Note 22*). The text also stated that Alexander had announced a second performance by himself and Miss Edith Tasca-Page in the Town Hall, on the evening of January 1st, this time with the support of the local Brass Band who would play in Town Hall Gardens, the small park behind the Town Hall, probably set up around the rotunda in the center of the park (see *Figure 8*): “Mr. Alexander announced that he would appear for the second time on the following evening.”

The performance, which was to take place on the evening of January 1, was also announced by Alexander in a small advertisement in the January 2 newspaper. (Alexander, 1897a; see *Note 20*), where it appeared on the same page as the review of his New Year’s Eve’s performance (note that the ad stated: “To-Night. To-Night. [...] Mr. F. M. ALEXANDER, in his UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT ! [...]. As given last

evening [...]). A short text, on the same page of the January 2 newspaper, entitled ‘Town Hall Gardens,’ also announced the performance of Alexander and Tasca-Page and the Beechworth Brass Band: “To-night a splendid promenade concert will be given by the Beechworth Brass Band, assisted by Mr. F. M. Alexander, who will give his wonderful entertainment on similar lines to last evening.” (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897b; see *Note 23*).

It is quite confusing when there are texts in the newspaper of January 2nd announcing a performance and stating that it will take place “tonight,” while it actually concerns a performance on the evening of January 1st. Are there any sources that confirm that January 1, 1897, was the correct date of Alexander and Tasca-Page’s second evening of entertainment? Yes, indeed. A government notice in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* of March 1897 clearly states that Alexander had hired the Town Hall — “at the rate of £1 10s per night” — for his performances on the evenings of 31 December 1896 and 1 January 1897 (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser* 1897p, see *Note 29*). We must therefore reasonably conclude that the issue of the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* dated January 2, 1897, had already been printed the day before and was in all probability also put into circulation on that day.

To add to the confusion about Alexander’s January 1, 1897, appearance, one more text about Alexander, titled ‘Unique Entertainment,’ appeared on page 8 of the January 2, 1897, newspaper (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897c; see *Note 24*). Its title and content are almost completely identical to an article in the newspaper of December 26, 1896 (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896h; see *Note 19*). The only difference between the two texts is that “New Year’s night” in the text of December 26, 1896, has been changed to “Thursday night” in the text of January 2, 1897. The entire 1897 text refers (again) to a performance by Alexander and Tasca-Page, backed by local singers from Beechworth, as did the 1896 text about the performance on December 31, 1896. Now, if the performance had been on Thursday after the newspaper date, it would have been on January 7, 1897. What is confusing, then, is that both texts also state that Alexander and Tasca-Page were to perform “for the first time before an audience in Beechworth at the Town Hall” — because their first actual performance was on December 31, 1896. Since no sources can be found that confirm performance by both of them on Thursday, January 7, 1897 — for example a review in the newspaper of January 9, 1897 — we may conclude that the article was printed by mistake, or, that a third entertainment of Alexander and Miss Edith Tasca-Page was planned by Alexander. Such a third performance never took place.

And a fourth text about Alexander, entitled ‘Vocal Culture,’ clearly an advertorial by Alexander, appeared in the newspaper of 2 January 1897 (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897d; see *Note 25*). The text refers to Alexander’s first appearance, on 31 December 1896, and states that he intended to spend a few more days at Beechworth teaching his ‘new methods.’ The text of a testimonial from “H. C. Geoghegan,” a resident of Beechworth, should suggest that Alexander had already achieved huge success in the short time he had been at Beechworth thus far: “I am glad to say the soundness and efficiency of your method of voice production and control was proved to me by a very rapid real improvement both in ray speaking and singing voice, which improvement was very perceptible within but a few days after I had begun to guide myself by your advice, and which was greater than I would have hoped to attain even after many months of assiduous practice” (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897d; see *Note 25*). The article went on to state that Alexander had received similar “eulogies” from others, including “Miss E. L. Hanaford, D. A. Fletcher, [and] the Misses Fletcher.” The text ended with an encouragement to take lessons from Alexander.

However, it must have been difficult — to impossible — to get lessons from Alexander in those early days of 1897, if we are to interpret the newspaper reports of Saturday January 9 correctly, for an advertisement from Alexander that day, entitled ‘Voice Culture, &c.,’ stated that he would return on January 11 to teach his clients again “in order to complete the course” (Alexander, 1897b; see *Note 21*). Would he be away for the weekend? In a small article about him in the newspaper, most likely an advertorial of his entitled ‘Mr. F. M. Alexander’s Methods,’ it was indicated that he was not in Beechworth, that he would return on “Monday next,” that is January 11, but most importantly that he had been seriously ill and had therefore not been able to teach for some undisclosed time:

The many admirers of this talented artist will be glad to hear that he is now quite out of danger, the serious symptoms [*sic*; J.S.] having entirely disappeared. His medical adviser states that he can be in Beechworth to take students on Monday next after 3.30, and those who have already commenced the course will kindly attend at once, and those who intend to commence should do so immediately. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897f; see *Note 27*).

This was the last text about Alexander and his stay, performances and teachings at Beechworth in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* between (most probably) 13 or 14 December 1896 and an unknown date in January 1897. Around the 20th of that month advertisements again appeared in the Melbourne newspapers, for example an advertisement entitled ‘Triumphs in Vocal Culture and Breathing’ in the *Reporter* of 22 January (Alexander, 1897c) — likely indicating that he was back in Melbourne.

The Aftermath of Alexander’s Stay at Beechworth

It is not known whether Edith Young — “Miss” Edith Tasca-Page” — travelled to Melbourne with Alexander after their stay at Beechworth. It is also not known whether she joined her husband after her Beechworth stage appearances with Alexander, or even whether she spent most of her time at Beechworth in the company of her husband Robert Young, leaving Beechworth with him around mid-January 1897. According to the *Daily Telegraph* (1897), the *Launceston Examiner* (1897abc) and the *Mercury* (1897), “Miss Edith Tasca-Page’s” husband Robert Forbes Young performed in the Albert Hall in Launceston, Tasmania on 26 January (Young, 1897). If he had been at Beechworth with his wife, say, between Christmas 1896 and the third week of 1897, he would have had ample time to be in time for his stage performance in Launceston, Tasmania, on 26 January. There are no newspapers and other sources which show where he was between Christmas 1896 and the third week of 1897. And texts about him performing in Launceston mentioned above make no mention of Edith Young, Mrs. Young, or Mrs. Robert Young (or Miss Edith Tasca-Page).

Since research in the local Beechworth library and through researcher Julie Skeggs at the Beechworth Robert O’Hara Burke Memorial Museum has not yielded any further primary sources, for example documents, photographs, Alexander treatises, the 1896 and 1897 London Tavern guestbooks, or playbills announcing Alexander’s performances, it is not known whether he arrived and left together with Edith Young (and perhaps in company with her husband Robert Young), and it is also not known whether Alexander met his friend former politician and memory expert Charles Edwin Jones at Beechworth who, according to texts about him and his *Memory Culture* lectures and classes in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, stayed at Beechworth and Bright from 23 January to about 6 March 1897 (see *Note 28*).

It is astonishing to see that Alexander’s “family history” tells a very different story about the period discussed above between mid-December 1896 and mid-January 1897, published by Jacky Evans. In her *Frederick Matthias Alexander: A Family History* she wrote that Alexander’s mother and some of his siblings spent Christmas 1896 in Melbourne and that “towards the end of January the Youngs came to Melbourne on holiday.” She states that the Young-couple “travelled from Hobart to Launceston where Robert took part in the annual grand concert of the Launceston Cycling Club. [...]. They then went by sea to Melbourne and joined the Alexanders” (Evans, 2001, p. 110).

Not a syllable, not one word in *Frederick Matthias Alexander: A Family History* about the time Alexander and Edith Young — Miss Edith Tasca-Page — spent at Beechworth in late 1896, early 1897, and about their activities there! Michael Bloch (2004, p. 44) discusses the period only briefly, but there too: not a word about the Beechworth performances of Alexander and Edith Young in his *F. M.: The Life of Frederick Matthias Alexander, Founder of the Alexander Technique*. And Rosslyn McLeod (1995) in her book “*Up From Down Under: The Australian Origins of Frederick Matthias Alexander and the Alexander Technique*” also makes no mention of Alexander and Edith Young’s stay and performances at Beechworth. And, yes, my own book (Staring, 2005) also says nothing about their Beechworth period. Only my further research carried out after 2005 brought to light data about the performances at Beechworth. From 2015 onwards I referred to the performances (Staring, 2015, 2021). The thought comes to mind that a long-held family secret may have come to light. Bloch wrote that a sort of *ménage à trois* developed between Alexander and

the Young-couple (Bloch, 2004, p. 46). Was the excursion by Alexander and his former pupil Edith Young to Beechworth perhaps an early sign of this?

In late February 1897, disaster struck the Alexander family. The family home in Wynyard, Tasmania, and the blacksmith shop of John Alexander, Frederick Matthias's father, burned down. Evans (2001, p. 111) writes: Frederick Matthias Alexander "agreed to provide financial support for his family" while his mother decided to remain in Melbourne with some of her children. Besides, things got worse for Alexander himself too, because three weeks later the following announcement appeared in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* of March 20th concerning an aftermath of his visit to Beechworth:

[...]. President and Councillors United Shire of Beechworth v. Frederick M. Alexander: Claim for £3, use and occupation of the Town Hall for two nights. No appearance of defendant. John W. Morton, shire secretary, deposed to making arrangements for letting the hall to the defendant, a teacher of elocution, for the nights of 31st December and 1st January, at a charge of £1. 10s. per night. [...]. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897p; see Note 29).

Note that this was not, incidentally, the only time that Alexander had to explain his behavior, intentions and activities in court about unpaid bills (cf., *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 1903ab; *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 1902ab; Figure 9 and Figure 10).

And then disaster struck, again, for Frederick Matthias Alexander, the first born of the Wynyard, Tasmania, John Alexander family. Evans (2001, p. 111) claims that his father turned out to be underinsured for the loss of his home and property in the fire mentioned above. He came to his father's aid and "persuaded the authorities that he would underwrite the debt" and "he would ensure it was repaid eventually." The outcome of the negotiations was that the bank "was satisfied with this statement of intent."

By the end of September 1897 Alexander, now an "accountant," was officially declared insolvent.

NEW INSOLVENTS. Frederick Matthias Alexander, of Leopold-street, South Yarra, accountant. Causes of insolvency—Sickness in family, loss in speculations, and pressure of creditors. Liabilities, £91/4/; assets, £21/11/; deficiency, £69/13/. Mr. R. C. Anderson, assignee. (*Argus*, 1897a; compare *Age*, 1897ab; *Argus*, 1897b).

Did this insolvency also solve the debt problem related to Alexander's father's insurance problem?

As far as the literature indicates, Alexander and Edith Young did not appear on stage together again until 13 September 1897, at the Australian Salon in Melbourne, organized by Mrs. W. E. Pickells (*Melbourne Punch*, 1897, p. 15). Edith Young again used her stage name Miss Edith Tasca-Page. On December 9, 1897, Edith's husband Robert Young performed at the All Saints' Choir Cake and Produce Fair in the Old State Schoolroom on Macquarie Street in Hobart, Tasmania (*Mercury*, 1897bc). The previous day Edith Young as Miss Edith Tasca-Page had been assistant artist at the annual concert of Miss Mattingley's pupils at the Melbourne Mechanics' Hall, the proceeds of which benefited the Latrobe-street Ragged Boys' Home (*North Melbourne Courier and West Melbourne Advertiser*, 1897ab). The *North Melbourne Gazette* reviewed her performance as follows:

A couple of bright little recitations were given by Miss Edith Tasca-Page, depicting a young lady's agonising inquiry, "Why Don't the Men Propose?" and the experiences of a couple in the gradual process of estrangement. The altogether bewitching style in which these were given fairly captured the audience, who demanded an encore, and when, in the second part of the programme, she appeared again in a touching poem full of pathos, entitled, "He Kept His Word," they insisted on a still more liberal treatment, and in compliance she gave a short, sharp and shocking little scrap, which she called "Billet-doux," but would have been better named as "William Did." (*North Melbourne Gazette*, 1897).

And a week and a half later, Edith Young placed an advertisement in the Melbourne newspaper *Argus*: "MISS EDITH TASCA-PAGE (Entertainer) is prepared to accept ENGAGEMENTS for At Homes, Concerts, etc. Letters care of Messrs. Allan & Co." (Tasca-Page, 1897).

All this effectively means that Edith and Robert Young were not together at that specific time; it may indicate that Edith intended to stay in Melbourne for some time, perhaps even that she had been living in Melbourne since the end of January of that year, next door to, perhaps even under the same roof as Alexander, while Robert was still living in Hobart. It could also be that Edith was already making preparations for the move to Melbourne, until Robert had given up his job as a clerk at the Hobart Police Court to move to Melbourne. Once Robert moved, he, Edith and Alexander lived together in one house in Melbourne.

In Australian newspapers of 1898 and later, the names Tasca-Page and Alexander appear together quite frequently. For example, on 11 May 1898, Tasca-Page and Alexander appeared in a performance of ‘Mr. F. M. Alexander’s Dramatic & Elocutionary Recital’ at the Athenaeum Hall, Collins Street, Melbourne. On June 25, Alexander and Tasca-Page performed again at the Athenaeum Hall (Age, 1898). The first Athenaeum Hall entertainment received a good review (*Table Talk*, 1898), in which “Miss Edith Tasca-Page” was again depicted as a “pupil of Mr. Alexander.” On 22 and 23 July 1898, there were performances of Alexander and Tasca-Page at the Town Hall in Adelaide, South Australia. Posters of several of these Melbourne and Adelaide performances still exist (McLeod, 1995, p. 74; Staring, 2005, pp. 67-68). Contrary to Evans’s claim that the Adelaide “performances were very favourably received” (Evans, 2001, p. 116), *Critic* reviewed the first Adelaide performance, exclaiming, “Mr. F. M. Alexander’s dramatic and elocutionary recital at the Town Hall was attended by small and frosty audiences. Mr. Alexander is a good amateur, but has yet much to learn before appearing on the professional platform;” and “Miss Edith Tasca-Page recited prettily, but should confine herself to most ordinary pieces. Tragic temper is too far above her. To shiver all over like blancmange is not a sufficiently powerful attempt at portraying rage. Anybody can do that” (*Critic*, 1898). However, the *Express and Telegraph* (1898) had a favorable review of the same evening and the *South Australian Register* (1898) had a favorable review of the second.

In later years advertisements, articles and critiques also named Robert Young as member of Alexander’s entertainment company, or as co-organizer of entertainments (for example, Alexander, 1900abc; Alexander & Young, 1899; Call Boy, 1899; *Daily Telegraph*, 1900; *Melbourne Punch*, 1899; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1902c; *Table Talk*, 1899; *Tatura Guardian*, 1899; *Warragul Guardian & News*, 1900ab; *West Gippsland Gazette*, 1900ab). Of course, events did not always happen the way Alexander would like them to, as this post in the *Forbes Times* of October 11, 1902, testifies:

To the Editor of the Forbes Times.

SIR,—I notice by a paragraph appearing in your contemporary that the local band has arranged to give an open-air performance in Victoria Park on Monday evening next. Although a lover of music and not wishing to deprive your citizens of listening to your excellent band, I would esteem it a favor if you would allow me to call attention to the fact that the Company I have the honor to represent is to appear in the Town Hall on that and the following night, and also that the hall was booked for us five weeks ago. Now, I think you will agree with me that the pieces to be staged are of such high class and interesting character, that music being discoursed by a band opposite the hall would not only disturb the members of the Company, but the audience also. I therefore, Sir, wish to appeal respectfully to the conductor and members of the band to defer their entertainment for a few nights.

— Yours respectfully, Representative F. Matthias Alexander, A. R. Israil. (Israil, 1902).

At other times, newspapers reported that Alexander’s requests to stage a performance were discussed in a meeting (e.g. *Bendigo Independent*, 1899; see *Note 30*), or were rejected (e.g. *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, 1900; see *Note 31*). One time a newspaper reported on a very tense evening where there almost happened a scuffle among the audience (*Bathurst Daily Free Press and Mining Journal*, 1902; see *Note 32*). Happily, for Alexander, sometimes all this was countered by something that represented an extra, a bonus, such as a message about a letter sent to the editor of a newspaper, the *Illawarra Mercury*, published in their May 14, 1902, edition:

‘The Merchant of Venice.’

ON FRIDAY EVENING.

The townspeople of Wollongong and those of other adjacent centres will be afforded a rare opportunity on Friday evening next to witness a popular Shakespearean representation by really high-class artistes. The very best testimony we can give regarding the merits of the company who are to give this representation is that of a gentleman of high literary standing in Sydney. That gentleman in a letter to the editor of the “Illawarra Mercury,” written last week, but with no intention that his remarks would appear in print, said: — “Mr. F. M. Alexander, the director of the Dramatic Conservatorium, Hunter-street, Sydney, contemplates giving, with the aid of his Shakespearean society, a performance of ‘The Merchant of Venice’ in Wollongong. The representation of that great play produced by Mr. Alexander at the Theatre Royal and Criterion theatre in Sydney last winter aroused much public interest and was received with high appreciation by lovers of Shakespeare. The play is lavishly staged, well acted, and never fails to produce a good impression, in Mr. Alexander’s hands. I feel sure he and his company will be well received by all Shakespearean students, as well as by the general public in your town and district. Mr. Alexander will himself repeat his admirable representation of Shylock, and his leading lady — Miss Tasca-Page — will appear as Portia. The other characters also will be worthily represented. I am personally interesting myself in Mr. Alexander as I think from what I have seen of his previous efforts in Sydney he will be received in the country as he certainly deserves to be.” (*Illawarra Mercury*, 1902).

Or, could this be a genuine F. M. Alexander advertorial in the style of ‘Professor Alphonse Loiset’ and Charles Edwin Jones?

Who knows?

SMALL DEBTS COURT.
Borough of West Maitland v. F. M. Alexander, Sydney, rent of Town Hall, £8. Mr. W. T. Lindsay, of Messrs. Norrie and Lindsay, for plaintiff Council. Defendant did not appear; but the affidavit of the bailiff in Sydney was to the effect that he had served the defendant personally with the notice. Verdict for the Council, with 8s costs.



Figure 9: Notification of Verdict, Borough of West Maitland versus F. M. Alexander (*Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 1903b). **Figure 10:** Envelope, postmarked March 10, 1924, sent to F. M. Alexander via bankruptcy receiver; sender’s address: 12, Queen Anne’s Gate, S.W.1. (Jeroen Staring Collection).

Notes

1. See for example Ludovici, 1927, 1935, 1937, 1938, 1944-45, 1945. Note that Ludovici’s 1933 book *Health and Education through Self-Mastery* carries a ‘Foreword’ by Alfred Cox, a former Medical Secretary of the British Medical Association. Cox claimed, “I have met Mr. Alexander several times” (Cox, 1933, p. iv) and “Mr. Alexander is no ‘quack doctor.’ If he were, I should not be writing this Foreword” (*Ibid.*, p. vi). He did not correct his opinion in his book *Among the Doctors* (Cox, n.d.).
2. Eight days after his 63rd birthday in January 1932, Alexander gave an undated copy of *The Use of the Self* to Gurney MacInnes with the inscription, “To Gurney MacInnes, as a token of my appreciation of his outlook and judgment in coming into the ‘New Profession’” (Ikeda (Ed.), 2024, p. 27). “New Profession” refers to the profession of Alexander Technique teacher (Rugg-Gunn, 1931).
3. Compare for example Damsté, 1978; Gilman & Yaruss, 2000; Schulte, 2003; Schulte & Walach, 2006; Sheehan, 1958; Staring, 2021; Van Riper, 1973; Woodman & Moore, 2012.
4. Article in *The Champion*, December 5, 1896, page 5:

A newspaper notice of George Rignold’s last production, “Work and Wages,” at Melbourne Royal, stated that Harry Diver and Jack Patten required some elocutionary training. The immediate effect of the notice was a letter and circular from F. M. Alexander, a teacher of elocution, stating that he was prepared to give the two actors a

course of lessons for the cultivation of the voice! The kind offer was received at 10 a.m., showing that the elocutionist, directly he read the notice, rushed off to the Post Office so as to be “first in the field,” and without thinking that it was also a rather rough reflection on George Rignold, who is acknowledged to be one of the best stage managers in Australia. Some of the greatest actors in the world have never had one lesson in elocution from these so-called teachers. Their early training from the bottom rung of the theatrical ladder and the exercising of their brains have enabled them to hold a foremost rank in the very first flight. One course of elocution at the outset of their career would, they declare, have damned their prospects. Not one of these “elocutionists” has made a name for himself on any stage. They are too mechanical, too stilted and most unnatural. Instinct, natural ability, quick perception and an ear for euphony are all that an actor requires. That “elocution actors” have no soul has been proved hundreds of times. (*Champion*, 1896).

5. Advertisement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 12, 1896, page 9:

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME ! PERFECTION PERFECTION in SINGING AND SPEAKING rendered easy ! VOCAL CULTURE and PROPER BREATHING. NEW METHODS. Mr. F. M. ALEXANDER, SPECIALIST in NEW METHODS of VOCAL CULTURE (Studio, Australian Buildings, 49 Elizabeth-street, Melbourne), will VISIT BEECHWORTH to impart the New Methods of Vocal Culture and Breathing Gymnastics, by which he has achieved such marvellous results in Melbourne. He can claim as students two gentlemen of world-wide repute, Professor Loissette and Mr. Frederic Villiers, also leading members of Medical Profession, University Professors, Clergymen, Theological Students, Professional and Amateur Singers, Reciters and Actors of Melbourne. The systems are easily acquired by all, and the human voice may be developed to a marvellous degree by applying them. All difficulties with Breathing, taking high or low notes, vocalising long passages, soon disappear, and the lungs and chest are greatly strengthened. In Melbourne Mr. Alexander has cured numerous cases of Stuttering, Defects of Voice, and Throat Troubles arising from errors in vocalisation. As he leaves for America early next year, this will be the only opportunity of acquiring these splendid methods, which will be imparted by means of a series of LECTURES and CLASS INSTRUCTION. The first Lecture will be given at 8 o'clock on MONDAY EVENING, Dec. 14th, IN Wissenden's Commercial Room. Special arrangements may be made for private tuition and private classes. Mr. Alexander may be interviewed on Monday, after 3 o'clock, and the following days, at Wissenden's. Those desiring further particulars before then please write to the Melbourne address as above. Copies of the New Treatise, “The Cultivation of the Singing and Speaking Voice,” may be procured at the office of this paper, Loch-street, Beechworth, Free of Charge. It is invaluable to all voice-users. FULL COURSE, £2 2s. BRIGHT, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17th. Facts to be Remembered. Voice is air manipulated through vocal chords. Therefore increased voice will follow increased air-taking capacity and proper manipulation. The new methods remove all strain from the throat. These pernicious habits, breathing through the mouth, gasping, and raising the shoulders in song and speech are entirely removed, and singing and speaking become pleasurable accomplishments instead of works of labor. The tremendous strain upon the human frame usually experienced by voice-users entirely disappears.

Undeniable Melbourne Statements.

Dr. D. S. MacColl, “Glen Nevis,” Richmond, writes: — “Your methods are excellent, and will do all in my power to further your interests.” Rev. Handel Jones, Congregational Manse, Williamstown, writes: — “I regard your method of breathing the most natural, philosophic and effective I have tried. It should be universally known.” The Hon. Sec. Baptist Theological College of Victoria, 32 Jolimont Terrace, East Melbourne, writes: — “The students at the Baptist College of Victoria have been under your tuition for some months. Not only are they very pleased with the trouble you have taken with them, but the committee are gratified to learn from those who hear them regularly that there has been a considerable improvement owing to your able teaching.” The Rev. F. C. Anderson, St. Peter's Church, Eastern Hill, writes: — “When I went to you my throat was giving me a good deal of trouble. After your tuition I have far greater ease in speaking, and my voice has greatly improved in strength and clearness.”

Singers.

Miss M. Ronson, 22 Villiers-street, Elsternwick, writes: — “I studied singing under several teachers without satisfaction. I was told to take breath before beginning to sing, and immediately I opened my mouth the lungs were emptied and I could never sing more than half an octave with one inspiration. Now I do not find it necessary to take breath before beginning to sing, and I can sing a full octave without the least effort. You have shown me how to produce my voice properly, and an increase in range and power is very noticeable. What was once a great effort is now a work of ease.” Miss Maude Bentley, Beach-street, Port Melbourne, writes: — “Your excellent system of breathing acquired two months ago has benefitted my voice to a remarkable degree. I can now sustain passages in singing with ease, which were quite impossible previously.”

Manager: A. DOUGLAS ALLEN. (Alexander, 1896b).

6. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 12, 1896, page 4:

Cultivation of the Voice. — Residents of Beechworth will be pleased to learn that an opportunity will be given them to acquire the new methods of vocalisation in song and speech as practised in the greater centres of the world. Mr. F. M. Alexander has been imparting these methods in Melbourne for 12 months with marvellous success at his studio, Australian Buildings. Leading members of the medical profession, University professors, clergymen, theological students and professional and amateur singers have availed themselves of the splendid opportunity offered by this able artist's visit. He leaves for America at the end of February, and, before leaving, intends to visit the chief country cities of Victoria. We have before us testimonials of the very highest order from ladies and gentlemen well known in Melbourne, who would not lend their names but to eulogise a conscientious and proved professor. Members of the medical profession consider Mr. Alexander's chest development and air manipulation wonderful, and he is the possessor of a very fine voice, which he frequently uses for 12 hours a day without feeling the least ill effects. All interested in Mr. Alexander's art may procure a copy of his new treatise — "The Cultivation of the Singing and Speaking Voice" — at this office, free of charge. For full particulars see our advertising columns. Mr. Alexander has cured numerous cases of stuttering, defects of voice and throat troubles caused by errors in vocal use. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896a).

Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 12, 1896, page 2:

The Human Voice. — The wonderful advancement made in various arts during this century has affected the development of the human voice in speech and song in a marked manner. The new methods as applied in the greater portion of the world in reality make a voice and remove all strain from the voice-user. Taking high or low notes is no longer a difficulty, and it is impossible for the voice to break on a note. Long passages in song are sustained without effort, and speaking may be indulged in for hours with pleasure. Hoarseness, sore throats, etc., so prevalent amongst voice-users, may be prevented or cured by adopting the systems referred to. Mr. F. M. Alexander, who visits us next week, is a high authority in regard to these matters, and the system of breathing he imparts is easily acquired, and taking breath in singing and speaking becomes automatic. Mr. Alexander is an expert in all matters relating to the voice, and removes all throat troubles caused by wrong use of the vocal organs by means of natural methods. He has cured the most difficult cases of stuttering, and his breathing gymnastics are recommended, not only to voice-users, but to those with weak chests and lungs, by the medical profession of Melbourne. All his methods are natural ones. The troubles mentioned are caused by abusing nature, and the new system, instead of interrupting natural laws, assists or restores them. Copies of Mr. Alexander's treatise on "The Cultivation of the Speaking and Singing Voice" may be procured at the office of this paper free of charge, and full particulars appear in our advertising columns. Mr. Alexander may be interviewed at Wissenden's commercial room, Camp-street, Beechworth, on Monday afternoon at 3 o'clock, and the first lecture will be given on Monday evening at 8 o'clock. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896b).

7. For more details on the life of Marcus Dwight Larrowe, aka 'Professor Alphonse Loisetete,' see Staring, 2021. See also:

<https://www.marypie.net/histories/loisette/marcus.php>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Frederick_Foster.

8. Alexander (MS, p. 20) wrote in a short autobiographical manuscript that Loisetete tried to persuade him "to return with him to the United States of America where he told me he could arrange for me to do the Leyland Recital Tour."

9. For more details on the life of Charles Edwin Jones, see Bate, 1978, pp. 138-144; *Illustrated Adelaide Post*, 1868; *Illustrated Australian News*, 1868; Staring, 2021. See also:

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jones-charles-edwin-3868>.

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/people-in-parliament/re-member/details/24/606>.

10. For more details on the life of Percy Reginald Dix, see Staring, 2021. See also:

<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3d8/dix-percy-reginald>.

<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Cyc02Cycl-t1-body1-d1-d25-d2.html#t1-body1-d1-d25-d2-d5>.

11. "This Volume is brought out solely for the use of Members of Mr. JONES' INSTRUCTION CLASSES, who are under obligations guaranteed by their sacred words of honor, that they will not under any circumstances give, lend, or sell the book or any part of it; nor convey to others not regularly instructed by Mr. Jones, any part of the instruction contained in this Volume. With that understanding the book is freely offered to members of Mr. Jones' Classes of Instruction as a material aid in acquiring the methods of Memory-Culture prepared by the author." (Jones, n.d. 2, p. 1).

12. The history of Beechworth has been described in, among others, Baragwanath, 2000; Darbyshire & Sayers, 1972; Beechworth Progress Association, n.d.; Harvey, 1952, 1981; Hawley & Davidson, 1972; Hilderbrand, 2007; Hyndman, 1992; Patterson, 2009, n.d. 1 and n.d. 2; Sayers, 1970; Shea, 2010; Woods, 1985. See also:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beechworth>.

<https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/index.php/places/99/download-report>.

13. Advertisement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 19, 1896, page 9:

NEW YEAR'S NIGHT. TOWN HALL, Beechworth. Mr. F. M. ALEXANDER, Will appear in his UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT! MIRTH, PATHOS, SENSATION, SONG, Assisted by Miss Edith Tasca-Page, The Charming Dramatic Artist, And Leading Vocalists of Beechworth. DURING this week Mr. Alexander has imparted his Wonderful Methods of Voice Culture in Speech and Song to the leading residents of this town, and will take Students for the week following his appearance. PRICES — 2s. and 1s. Seats may be reserved, without extra charge, at H. J. Floyd and Co.'s, Ford-street, Beechworth. Plan now open. (Alexander, 1896d).

14. Article (advertorial?) *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 19, 1896, page 2:

New Year's Night. — Mr. F. M. Alexander, who has imparted his new methods in singing, speaking and breathing with such great satisfaction to our leading residents during the week, has decided on his second visit for students to give his splendid entertainment in the Town Hall, by which he has gained such a great reputation in Australia and other parts of the world where he has appeared. On the evening of his arrival the members of the Liedertafel had the honor of listening to him in a portion of his work. All are in raptures with the items given. Mr. Alexander is an artist of the first order, and in December last year had a splendid engagement offered to him in America, which he was prevented from accepting on account of ill-health, the sole cause of his remaining in these colonies. His announcement appears in another column. The prices are popular ones, and a splendid evening's entertainment will be enjoyed by those who attend. Miss Edith Tasca-Page will appear with Mr. Alexander in two humorous scenes from Sheridan's comedy "The School for Scandal," and a number of our leading vocalists will also assist. Outside of the evening's enjoyment, all who speak or sing should hear this artist, and they will then understand what a wonderful organ is the human voice when properly cultivated by the new methods. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896c).

15. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 19, 1896, page 3:

The Human Voice. — The wonderful advancement made in various arts during this century has affected the development of the human voice in speech and song in a marked manner. The new methods as applied in the greater portion of the world in reality make a voice and remove all strain from the voice-user. Taking high or low notes is no longer a difficulty, and it is impossible for the voice to break on a note. Long passages in song are sustained without effort, and speaking may be indulged in for hours with pleasure. Horseness, sore throats, etc., so prevalent amongst voice-users, may be prevented or cured by adopting the systems referred to. Mr. F. M. Alexander, who is at present on a visit to Beechworth, is a high authority in regard to these matters, and the system of breathing he imparts is easily acquired, and taking breath in singing and speaking becomes automatic. Mr. Alexander is an expert in all matters relating to the voice, and removes all throat troubles caused by wrong use of the vocal organs by means of natural methods. He has cured the most difficult cases of stuttering, and his breathing gymnastics are recommended, not only to voice-users, but to those with weak chests and lungs, by the medical profession of Melbourne. All his methods are natural ones. The troubles mentioned are caused by abusing nature, and the new system, instead of interrupting natural laws, assists or restores them. Copies of Mr. Alexander's treatise on "The Cultivation of the Speaking and Singing Voice" may be procured at the office of this paper free of charge, and full particulars appear in our advertising columns. Mr. Alexander may be interviewed at Wissenden's commercial room, Camp-street, Beechworth. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896d).

16. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 19, 1896, page 4 (=1896e) and page 8 (=1896f),

Vocal Culture. — Mr. F. M. Alexander will receive students to-day and during the remainder of this week, as he intends to stay in Beechworth for that time instead of 3 days. He will give the lessons at Wissenden's commercial room, Camp-street, each day and evening. In consequence he will be unable to visit Bright, and intending students in that town should write him as per advertisement. Mr. Alexander's extended stay with us should indeed be good news to all interested in singing and speaking, as a great deal can be done in that time, and the benefits to be derived are very great. He is a perfect master of his profession, and it is to be hoped he will be rewarded for placing his new method within reach of all — private or class lessons as desired. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896e, 1896f).

17. Advertisement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 26, 1896, page 7:

NEW YEAR'S NIGHT. TOWN HALL, Beechworth. Mr. F. M. ALEXANDER, Will appear in his UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT! MIRTH, PATHOS, SENSATION, SONG, Assisted by Miss Edith Tasca-Page, The Charming Dramatic Artist, And Leading Vocalists of Beechworth. DURING this week Mr. Alexander has imparted his Wonderful Methods of Voice Culture in Speech and Song to the leading residents of this town, and will take Students for the week following his appearance, PRICES— 2s. and 1s, Seats may be reserved, without extra charge, at H. J. Floyd and Co.'s, Ford-street, Beechworth. Plan now open. (Alexander, 1896e).

18. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 26, 1896, page 6:

New Year's Night. — Mr. F. M. Alexander, who has imparted his new methods in singing, speaking and breathing with such great satisfaction to our leading residents during the week, has decided on his second visit for students to give his splendid entertainment in the Town Hall, by which he has gained such a great reputation in Australia and other parts of the world where he has appeared. On the evening of his arrival the members of the Liedertafel had the honor of listening to him in a portion of his work. All are in raptures with the items given. Mr. Alexander is an artist of the first order, and in December last year had a splendid engagement offered to him in America, which he was prevented from accepting on account of ill-health, the sole cause of his remaining in these colonies. His announcement appears in another column. The prices are popular ones, and a splendid evening's entertainment will be enjoyed by those who attend. Miss Edith Tasca-Page will appear with Mr. Alexander in two humorous scenes from Sheridan's comedy "The School for Scandal," and a number of our leading vocalists will also assist. Outside of the evening's enjoyment, all who speak or sing should hear this artist, and they will then understand what a wonderful organ is the human voice when properly cultivated by the new methods. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896g).

19. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 26, 1896, page 2:

Unique Entertainment. — On New Year's night we are to enjoy a thorough treat, as Mr. F. M. Alexander, who is universally admitted the most versatile entertainer in Australia, will give his enjoyable entertainment for the first time before a Beechworth audience at the Town Hall. All lovers of true humor will be delighted that two scenes from Sheridan's comedy, "The School for Scandal," will be presented. Mr. Alexander will take Sir Peter, and Miss Tasca-Page will play Lady Teazle, a character in which she has won golden honors. She will also give two sketches during the evening. A number of our best known vocalists will assist, and altogether an uncommon programme has been arranged. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896h).

20. Advertisement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 2, 1897, page 2:

To-Night. To-Night. Town Hall and Gardens GRAND PROMENADE CONCERT! by the Beechworth Brass Band and Mr. F. M. ALEXANDER, in his UNIQUE ENTERTAINMENT ! MIRTH, SENSATION & SONG, As given last evening before a large audience with great success. See news column for criticism. The last opportunity of hearing Mr. Alexander prior to his departure for America. Admission to all parts, 1s. BRILLIANT ILLUMINATIONS ! Gates open at 7; Concert at 8. (Alexander, 1897a).

21. Advertisement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 9, 1897, page 9:

Voice Culture, &c. Mr. F. M. ALEXANDER will return to Beechworth on MONDAY NEXT, JANUARY 11th, after 3.30 in the afternoon, to take Students, and those already commenced are requested to attend to complete the course. Address — Wissenden's Commercial Room, Camp-street, Beechworth (side entrance). (Alexander, 1897b).

22. Review in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 2, 1897, page 2:

Elocutionary and Musical Entertainment. The entertainment which was presented on Thursday evening at the Town Hall, Beechworth, was one which from its great variety and exceptional merit should have commanded a far larger audience, the clever and versatile performance of the actor-reciter, Mr. F. M. Alexander, being such as alone should attract a crowded house. An additional attraction was advanced in the powerful rendering of several dramatic selections by the charming artist, Miss Edith Tasca-Page, and the excellence of the programme was further contributed to by the appearance of many of the leading vocalists of Beechworth and its vicinity. The entertainment commenced with a pianoforte solo, "Caprice," brilliantly executed by Miss Manton, after which Mr. H. Floyd gave the song "The Last Watch" in his usual finished style. Mr. Alexander then appeared and furnished convincing proof of the versatility of his elocutionary powers in three recitations, the rough pathos of the poem "Lasca" being splendidly contrasted with the humor of "After Marriage," and the excitement of "The Amateur Rider," and in response to an enthusiastic recall, Mr. Alexander gave a short but laughable recitation "The Country Squire," which was equally well received. Miss Brown's rendition of "Whisper and I Shall Hear" was so artistically given as to excite unanimous applause; and Mr. G. Allen exhibited a rare mastery of the violin in his facile rendering of Fowler's "Pastorale." Two scenes from the perennially fresh comedy,

“The School for Scandal,” were then presented by Mr. Alexander and Miss Tasca-Page, in which the senile peevishness of the old nobleman and the coquettish wilfulness of his young wife were portrayed with a fidelity to nature which evoked frequent bursts of laughter and applause, and compelled a recall, the artists bowing their acknowledgments. After a brief intermission, Mr. Stewart appeared and gave a powerful and manly rendition of the favorite song “The Young Brigade.” Mr. Alexander followed, and once more aroused the hilarity of the audience by his quaint delivery of the humorous recitation “Love in a Balloon;” and was succeeded by Mrs. A. A. Billson, who sang “Dreams” in her accustomed sweet and effective style; while Mr. G. Allen showed much delicacy of manipulation in his execution of two of Mozart’s “Minuets” as a violin solo. Miss Tasca-Page’s dramatic power was exquisitely demonstrated in the pathetic recitation “Keeping his Word,” the applause being hearty and prolonged. Mr. Floyd gave another proof of his careful and finished vocalisation in his rendering of the wellknown song “The Romany Lass;” and a most delightful and talented entertainment concluded with a splendid recitation, “Kissing Cup’s Race,” in which the gradually increasing ardor of a steeple chase was expressed with inimitable power, Mr. Alexander being compelled to reappear, upon which he delivered a short but deliciously humorous poem, entitled “Love in a Cottage,” retiring amid a perfect storm of applause. The vocal selections were materially assisted by the artistic performances of Miss Manton and Mr. L. Dyring. In conclusion, Mr. Alexander announced that he would appear for the second time on the following evening (New Year’s night), at the Town Hall, in conjunction with the Beechworth Brass Band, on which occasion he would also be assisted by several leading vocalists, who had kindly consented to assist. As this will be the last appearance in Beechworth for some time of these talented artists both residents and visitors should take advantage of this opportunity to participate in a rare intellectual means of amusement. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897a).

On 15 September 1900, during a performance with Alexander and her husband Robert Young at the Centenary Hall in Sydney, and at a matinee performance organized by Miss Maud Fitz-Stubb at the Queen’s Hall in Sydney on 28 May 1902, Edith Tasca-Page recited the poem ‘Lasca’ and the humorous text ‘After Marriage’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 1900a, 1902ab) that Alexander had recited during his performance at Beechworth on 31 December 1896 (see this note above). The particular performance on September 15th, 1900, ultimately earned ‘Edith Tasca-Page’ a place in Australian theatre history — in the article *Life and Love and ‘Lasca’* (Kirkpatrick, 2010, pp. 144-145).

23. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 2, 1897, page 2:

Town Hall Gardens. — To-night a splendid promenade concert will be given by the Beechworth Brass Band, assisted by Mr. F. M. Alexander, who will give his wonderful entertainment on similar lines to last evening, when he held his audience spell-bound with the Racing Sketches, and created roars of laughter with his humorous numbers. This will be the last opportunity of hearing this splendid entertainment, as he leaves for America next month. Our critique of his entertainment last evening appears elsewhere. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897b).

24. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 2, 1897, page 8:

Unique Entertainment. — On Thursday night we are to enjoy a thorough treat, as Mr. F. M. Alexander, who is universally admitted the most versatile entertainer in Australia, will give his enjoyable entertainment for the first time before a Beechworth audience at the Town Hall. All lovers of true humor will be delighted that two scenes from Sheridan’s comedy, “The School for Scandal,” will be presented. Mr. Alexander will take Sir Peter, and Miss Tasca-Page will play Lady Teazle, a character in which she has won golden honors. She will also give two sketches during the evening. A number of our best known vocalists will assist, and altogether an uncommon programme has been arranged. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897c).

This text is almost identical to a text (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, December 26, 1896, page 2 (see *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1896h; *Note 19*, above).

25. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 2, 1897, page 2:

Vocal Culture. — Mr. F. M. Alexander, who appeared with such great success last night, intends to stay for some days in Beechworth to impart his new methods. The following is an extract from H. C.-Geoghegan, Esq., of this city, after studying Mr. Alexander’s methods : — “I am glad to say the soundness and efficiency of your method of voice production and control was proved to me by a very rapid real improvement both in ray speaking and singing voice, which improvement was very perceptible within but a few days after I had begun to guide myself by your advice, and which was greater than I would have hoped to attain even after many months of assiduous practice.” Similar eulogies have been received from Miss E. L. Hanaford, D. A. Fletcher, the Misses Fletcher and others, and this splendid opportunity should not be missed by a single person who uses the human voice. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897d).

Later, in Sydney, in a brochure, Alexander quoted Geoghegan's words again, this time a longer version of what he may have written. It is notable that Geoghegan is not now living in Beechworth, but is a "Barrister," with an address at 17 Queen Street in Melbourne:

HANBURY C. GEOGHEGAN, Esq., Barrister, 17 Queen St., writes: — I was tempted to try your methods though (I may confess this now) with faintest hope of amendment. I am glad to say the soundness and efficiency of your method of voice production and control was proved to me by a very rapid real improvement both in ray speaking and singing voice, which improvement was very perceptible within but a few days after I had begun to guide myself by your advice, and which was greater than I would have hoped to attain even after many months of assiduous practice." (Alexander, n.d., p. 4).

That Geoghegan was a resident of both Melbourne and Beechworth is evident from the following 1887 'Notice of Partnership' in the *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* by solicitors Ferguson H. Tuthill, Hanbury C. Geoghegan and Richard H. Perry:

[...]. TUTHILL and PERRY, solicitors of Beechworth, have this day entered into Partnership with HANBURY C. GEOGHEGAN; solicitor, formerly of Dublin, and. the now firm will carry on business as SOLICITORS, PROCTORS, And CONVEYANCERS Under the style of TUTHILL, GEOGHEGAN, and PERRY, At Beechworth and at 19 Queen street (Fraser's building), in the city of Melbourne. Dated this 1st day of March 1887. (Tuthill, Geoghegan, & Perry, 1887).

26. Article in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 9, 1897, page 8:

[...]. The evening's amusements comprised a musical recital by the Beechworth Brass Band at the Town Hall Gardens, and which in conjunction with the talented display of elocution by Mr. F. M. Alexander and Miss Tasca-Page in the hall, attracted a numerous attendance, the walks and the room being thronged with visitors Those who were inclined for more active enjoyment resorted to the Oddfellows Hall, [...]. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897e).

27. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 9, 1897, page 2:

Mr. F. M. Alexander's Methods. — The many admirers of this talented artist will be glad to hear that he is now quite out of danger, the serious symptoms [*sic*; J.S.] having entirely disappeared. His medical adviser states that he can be in Beechworth to take students on Monday next after 3.30, and those who have already commenced the course will kindly attend at once, and those who intend to commence should do so immediately. Mr. Alexander may be interviewed at Wissenden's Commercial room as usual. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897f).

28. Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 23, 1897, page 2:

The Later Developments of Mr. C. E. Jones's Memory System.— Mr. C. E. Jones, whose ability as a lecturer is beyond question, proposes to visit Beechworth within the next ten days to deliver a free lecture on "Memory," which cannot fail to prove very interesting, amusing, and instructive, after which he will form classes for "Memory Culture," by personal instruction during one week, and by correspondence. Mr. Jones has upwards of 300 lectures on various subjects, any of which he can deliver, without notes or memoranda, on demand at 10 minutes' notice, and the system by which such work can be accomplished is well worth knowing. Mr. Jones' address is Modern—Chambers, Collins-street, Melbourne. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897g).

Advertisement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 30, 1897, page 9:

MEMORY! FREE LECTURE. Oddfellows' Hall, Beechworth. Mr. C. E. JONES, MEMORY PSYCHOLOGIST [*sic*; J.S.], Invites Beechworth to his Interesting and Amusing Lecture on "Memory" on TUESDAY EVENING. FEBRUARY 2nd, 1897, after which classes may be formed to acquire "MEMORY CULTURE," On the Best System ever yet formulated. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897h).

Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, January 30, 1897, page 2:

Memory Psychologist. — The art of memorising is more than 4000 years old, and how much more no living man can tell; but until the present century, when the services of Dr. Pick opened his methods to the world, "thought memory" system remained unknown. Mr. Jones will deal with the newest of new methods of memorising in the classes he hopes to form in Beechworth next week, and at his "free lecture" in the Oddfellows' Hall, Beechworth, on Tuesday evening he will explain his *modus operandi* in some degree. Mr. Jones is well known as a lecturer, having convulsed audiences in this district night after night for a month at a time with pleasure and profit to all concerned. He will remain here about a week, and his many friends should induce him to give one of his humorous lectures for the benefit of local institutions some evening during his stay. It is not difficult to persuade him to assist in any good work. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897i).

Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, February 6, 1897, page 9:

BRIGHT. [from our own correspondent.] [...]. An old time platform favorite in this district is announced to come here again, in a few days. Mr. C. E. Jones is the gentleman [Bassanio ?; J.S.] to who will be remembered by the senior residents for his amusing, lectures, “Sketches in Parliament,” “Fools and Their Teachings,” etc. Mr. Jones’s mission just now is to teach how to improve bad memories and make good memories better. Several schemes of memory improvement are before the public, and it is claimed that the system advocated by Mr. Jones, is far and away superior to anything known. Some idea of this excellence of Mr. Jones’ system, can be formed from the fact, that gentleman has a list of 300 lectures, any one of which he is prepared to deliver without notes of any kind, and without any previous notice. The talented lecturer, who I understand is as amusing and entertaining as of yore, will speak at the Masonic Hall on Friday, February 12th, on “Memory,” when, in addition to the other attractions, the admission will be free. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897j).

Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, February 6, 1897, page 2:

Memory Culture. — Mr. C. E. Jones, the eminent instructor in the cultivation of the memory, intimates to any who may be desirous of communicating with him with the object of forming classes or obtaining any information that they may do so by interviewing Mr. Richard Warren, jun., at the office of this paper. Mr. Jones intends to deliver his interesting lecture on “Memory” on Friday next, the 12th inst., at Bright, where he will remain for a week, visiting Harrierville and other centres subsequently. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897k).

Article (advertorial?) in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, February 6, 1897, page 8:

Lecture on Memory. — A good memory is admittedly an excellent quality to be possessed of, but unfortunately such a gift is as rare as it is valuable. Many schemes have been devised for supplementing this faculty either by its constant exercise or by artificial means, some of which have proved too intricate and cumbersome to admit of general adoption. Mr. C. E. Jones, who many years ago astonished and delighted crowded audiences throughout this district with a series of highly interesting and amusing lectures on a diversity of subject, again appears before a Beechworth audience as a memory psychologist [*sic*; J.S.] at the Oddfellows’ Hall this evening, when he invites all interested in the subject to attend his free lecture upon “Memory,” which will be found replete with interest as well as humorously illustrated. Mr. Jones claims to be in possession of the best system yet formulated, and will form classes of all wishing to acquire it. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897l).

Review in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, February 6, 1897, page 7:

LECTURE ON THOUGHT MEMORY. The advantages arising from the possession of a retentive memory in every condition of life are so apparent that the means of acquiring or improving the same cannot be too highly appreciated. The lecture on this subject delivered by Mr. C. E. Jones on Tuesday evening at the Oddfellows’ Hall was therefore of special interest, not only from the importance of the subject, but also the known ability of the lecturer to treat of it in a manner which should be at once entertaining and instructive, two conditions which he fulfilled very successfully. In his exordium the lecturer pointed out that the habitual exercise of memory had been necessary from the most remote ages. Even the most barbarous tribes must have exercised their memory in recalling day after day various processes, such as obtaining fire by the friction of two sticks and other operations, so that they became established in their minds as matters of daily occurrence. He then proceeded to describe in a familiar and lucid manner the composition of the human brain with its lower and superior divisions, and how the nervous system received external impressions and transmitted them to the lower brain and subsequently to the higher. The effects produced upon the lower brain were merely transitory, and this accounted for the sudden lapses of memory even in well educated and intelligent persons. He here excited great amusement by his humorous account of a person who called upon him in a convulsive state of laughter to recount to him a new conundrum, and after all could only remember the first three words. An instance was also given in which Proctor, the eminent scientist, while concluding a lecture with a poetical peroration, was disturbed by a sudden noise, and found it utterly impossible to continue or repeat the quotation. He thereupon applied a method of thought memory, and on trial found the most violent interruption could not disturb his sequence of recollection. Instances were also given of several celebrated men who were looked upon as perfect dunces at school, as David Webster, Charles Darwin and others, but whose memory and consequent general intelligence became stronger in after life by assiduous exercise of that faculty. The story of Daniel O’Connell, who could not even master the alphabet, and the quaint method by which a friendly priest impressed the characters upon his mind was a capital piece of humorous narration. The lecturer then proceeded to trace the history of the art of mnemonics from its earliest stages. The introduction of a definite method of improving the memory had been generally attributed to the Greek poet, Simonides, although it might reasonably be conjectured that there had been other methods employed long anterior to his existence. His system with slight variations was adopted and utilised for centuries throughout the Roman Empire, until its disruption by the northern barbarians caused the art to be relegated to obscurity, from which it did not emerge until the monk philosopher Roger Bacon revived it and preserved it in a Latin treatise. This was the foundation upon which succeeding professors of the art erected their systems, varieties of which had been brought before the public up

to the present time. Another amusing anecdote was here introduced as to how the actor Foote confounded the pretensions of Laughlin as a memorist by composing a grotesque sentence which the latter failed to repeat from memory after repeated readings. The lecturer then recounted the appearance of the German professor Von Feinaigle as a lecturer upon the art in 1811 and of others up to the present, including Doctor Pick, who had evolved one of the most useful and easily applied of such systems. He then proceeded to describe and compare the various systems, as by means of alphabetical numerals and the bridging or connection of words forming a chain of thought leading from one idea to another, and explained that it was by collating and digesting these various systems that an almost perfect system of thought memorising had been evolved. The lecturer was frequently applauded in the course of his lecture and answered questions as to the application of the system. He also announced that he would be staying in Beechworth for a short period, during which he purposed forming classes for instruction in this valuable art, either personally or by correspondence. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897m).

Review in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, February 27, 1897, page 3:

BRIGHT. [From our own correspondent] [...]. Mr. C. E. Jones, of lecturing and memory culture fame, lectured on Friday at the Masonic Hall on "Memory." He reviewed the various systems adopted to improve the memory at different stages of the world's history, and showed that on the whole full use is not made of the brain's power. Instances were given of bad memories having been improved and actually made good by following a definite system of study. The lecture was of a decidedly instructive nature. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897n).

Review in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, March 6, 1897, page 3:

LECTURE AT BRIGHT BY MR. C. E. JONES. Mr. C. E. Jones, one of the pioneers of the protectionist movement in Victoria, and a prominent member of the Parliament that placed a tariff Act in the interest of local production on the statute book of the colony, addressed a public meeting at the Chalet Hotel on Thursday week. Mr. Jones being in Bright on business, a number of electors who desired to see the opposite side of the fiscal picture to that presented to the public gaze by the Premier of New South Wales, by Mr. Max Hirsch, and by certain newspapers whose continuous aim appears to be to discredit their own colony, invited him to speak on the topics now engaging public attention. The theme of Mr. Jones's discourse "Great and Greater Britain," was wide enough to embrace the freetrade v. protection dispute, the Federation movement and the German trade invasion. The lecturer in commencing briefly acknowledged the compliment that had been paid in inviting him to speak, and then passed on to describe in detail the condition of affairs that prevailed in the colony in the early sixties, when large numbers of tradesmen were walking the streets forming a vast and ever increasing army of unemployed, while foreign manufactured goods of all kinds were being imported. The necessity of something being done was forced on the ministry of the day, and Sir James, then Mr. McCulloch, who was premier, promised a small modicum of protection as an experiment. Of the sincerity of Sir. McCulloch in his professions [*sic*; J.S.] to foster local trade there was much cause to doubt. A compact, party in the Assembly, however, insisted on the promises being carried out, and the result has been that the protectionist policy then initiated, since altered and adopted to local requirements as experience has shown to be necessary and wise, has placed Victoria in the forefront of industrial progress amongst the colonies of Australia. In common with nearly every Englishman, he was on his arrival in Melbourne a devout believer in the doctrines of Cobden, and cocksure that Freetrade was the only right and safe policy for a nation to pursue. Here they were confronted with a difficulty which was not to be disposed of in the simple and perhaps agreeable manner suggested by Sir John O'Shannassy when in reply to Heales' query, "What shall we do with our boys," he advised that they be "married to the girls." The fact that practically all the civilised world was against England on the tariff question was forced on their consideration, and the conclusion arrived at was that the local market would have to be supplied by local production. The lecturer was one of those who occupied a seat in the gallery on the occasion of the Freetrade banquet to Mr. Reid, Premier of New South Wales, during the previous week, and he related in a humorous manner how the Sydney Premier had dealt with Mr. Max Hirsch's single tax effusions. Mr. Reid has imposed a land tax, but to expect him to join ranks with the single taxers was to ask him to go further than he was likely to obtain support from his importing friends, therefore Mr. Hirsch and the single taxers had to be repudiated. In refutation of the claim set up by Mr. Reid that Great Britain had resumed the manufacturing supremacy she had for a time enjoyed, and the very high position amongst the nations she had attained, the lecturer took what he termed a mere "hop, step and jump" through English history, commencing with the visit of Julius Cesar [*sic*; J.S.], 55 B.C., and then dealing with the occupancy of the country by the Romans; later on, when the population was 10,000,000 or over, and no less than 500 ships were sent with grain to feed the starving people on the banks of the Tiber. How was such a population sustained? For never again until the close of the 18th century were there so many inhabitants. The answer was easily given. A large number of the people were engaged in other pursuits than mere grazing and agriculture, the production of raw material never having brought a nation into a position of eminence. With the decadence of the Roman Power the departure of Roman troops from England left it a prey to marauding tribes and oversea adventurers, with the result that the arts, trades, sciences, etc., were lost, and when William of Normandy came over in 1066 the population was only 1,000,000 (or about the same as the inhabitants of Victoria number at the present time) engaged in primitive occupations, and unable to resist the invader. The lessons the lecturer deduced from these facts were that the

several states of a country ought to unite — federate — for defence against any outside foe, and develop the resources of the country to the end that it may, in the hour of need, be independent of foreigners. Progressive development took place under William the Norman, the developments were sketched interestingly, the Doomesday Book was lightly touched upon, as was also the parliament that assembled over six centuries ago as a result of the granting of the Magna Charta by King John. But great as the benefits that were derived from the liberal institutions established through the patriotism of the people, the king, who brought over 70 Flemish families to teach the English weaving, conferred benefits of a practical and lasting nature on the country. The introduction of dyeing and the development of many other industries were racily referred to, and the active part the English Government had taken in fostering means of employing the inhabitants of the country show in such a manner as to make it quite clear that the position attained by England as a manufacturing nation was not due in any way to freetrade. The means adopted by England to foster the shipping trade, when bonuses were paid for making trips to foreign countries, were contrasted with what colonial freetraders declare to be the duty of the State. The invidious position occupied by the Premier of New South Wales imposing as a freetrader where he restricts competition for Government supplies to residents of his colony was exposed, and then the lecturer went on to show the disastrous results that had followed the production of raw material only in certain American States, and the prosperous conditions prevailing in other parts of the union where manufactures have been established. Coming onto deal with the disparaging remarks that have been made of Victoria by Mr. Max Hirsch and other freetraders, Mr. Jones proved conclusively that Victoria is not being left behind in the march of progress, as her industrial works are far in advance of any of her sister colonies. Victorian capital has developed Riverina and is also invested in all the other colonies. Dealing with some of the statistics that Mr. Hirsch uses at his meetings, Mr. Jones said they bore evidence of slight of hand in their manipulation; and gave instances when, after the publication of a specially prepared list of prices, an influential freetrade journal had refused to publish a correct list of prices although brought to the office as an advertisement and payment rendered for its insertion. The story of the rise and progress of the United States was told in eloquent sentences; the consistent adhesion of the people of that country to a policy of protection, being the outcome of the benefits that had accrued there from to the nation. As an example of what can be effected in a short time by the Government of a country fostering its resources and assisting to build up industries the small kingdom of Wurtemberg was cited. Fifty years ago the inhabitants were for the most part poor, ekeing out an uncertain subsistence from the soil with long hours of weary toil, and the Government was in dire distress financially. The great London Exhibition of 1851 gave the wise men of Wurtemberg a number of practical object lessons from which they profitted, and the market being secured by such duties as were found sufficient an immense export trade in manufactured goods soon grew up, until now there is no country in Europe so prosperous, having no national debt and a total absence of paupers. The lecture, which was of a most entertaining nature, was made still more interesting and amusing by the introduction of apropos anecdotes, and was brought to a conclusion by a brilliant peroration, the lecturer, on resuming his seat, being warmly applauded. A number of questions having been submitted and replied to by Mr. Jones, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded the lecturer, with acclamation, on the proposition of Mr. J. E. Leonard, seconded by Mr. J. Slee. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897o)

29. Annoucement in *The Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, March 20, 1897, page 9:

BEECHWORTH POLICE COURT. Friday, March 19. (Before Messrs. Ingram and Stredwick, J's.P.) debt cases. [...]. President and Councilors United Shire of Beechworth v. Frederick M. Alexander: Claim for £3, use and occupation of the Town Hall for two nights. No appearance of defendant. John W. Morton, shire secretary, deposed to making arrangements for letting the hall to the defendant, a teacher of elocution, for the nights of 31st December and 1st January, at a charge of £1. 10s. per night. The account was not disputed, and had never been paid. Order for amount, with 15s 6d. costs. (*Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1897p).

30. Article in *The Bendigo Independent*, September 26, 1899, page 2:

Austral Society. — The fortnightly meeting was held at the A.N.A. Hall last evening; the president, Mr. G. Byrne, in the chair. There was a large attendance. Three new members were proposed. A letter from Mr. F. M. Alexander, elocutionist, offering to give a recital under the auspices of the society was referred to the committee. [...]. (*Bendigo Independent*, 1899).

31. Article in *The Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, February 9, 1900, page 2:

WODONGA SHIRE COUNCIL. WEDNESDAY, 7th FEBRUARY.

[...]. From F. M. Alexander, Melbourne, addressed to "The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Wodonga," stating that he and two others intended to give a series of entertainments in various parts of Victoria in aid of the Empire Patriotic Fund, the performers charging £4 4s each for each night's performance. No action. [...]. (*Wodonga and Towong Sentinel*, 1900).

32. Review in *The Bathurst Daily Free Press and Mining Journal*, June 17, 1902, page 2:

The Merchant of Venice.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT IN THE PIT.

THE POLIOE INTERFERE.

Mr. F. Matthias Alexander and his company will have reason to remember their first visit to Bathurst. There is no doubt that it will be the last and the impressions of a Bathurst audience which Mr. Alexander will convey to the management of several first-class companies in the Metropolis will certainly make them chary about showing here. The “gods” said no mistakably last night they did not want Shakespeare — but then other and decent people did — and the latter were in the majority. If the former objected to the piece, well, there are several large doors attached to the building, and it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the malcontents to have cleared out. But this was not their idea. Seeing that no one interfered with them they grew bolder and bolder until at last the whole affair resolved itself into a sort of “Protestant Half” political meeting. Some of the participants, who have never been outside of their own town nor further than the Railway Station, apparently had the idea they were emulating the “gods” of Sydney. Comparing the twain as a whole — the Sydney gallery is “respectable.” At all events, he has sufficient brains not to expect Peggy Pryde to appear in the “Merchant of Venice” — and another, and to him more convincing argument, is the knowledge that if he dared resort to interjections of any kind he would be promptly squelched — and squelched by the members of his own particular class too. Take any theatrical performance in the metropolis variety or otherwise, the “gods” would not attempt such dastardly conduct as was in evidence at the Bathurst School of Arts last night. One interjection would have been sufficient for the unfortunate individual who had emitted such to, in push parlance, be “smothered.” He would have neither touched walls, floor or ceiling, but reached the street pavement through space.

Matters got so bad last night that Mr. Alexander came to the front and attempted to make himself heard in an endeavor to appeal for fair play. No; the howling ignoramuses perceived that no one attempted to check them and they refused to listen to a gentleman and an artist. However, a number of the committee of the School of Arts who happened to be present gathered themselves together, and in a body went to the back and interviewed Mr. Alexander, who gave them power to order the arrest of anyone creating a disturbance. At this time a couple of policemen were to be seen in the pit, but their presence was ignored altogether by the crowd. What did they care for policemen? The police had never dared to interfere with them before! Subsequently the burly form of a civilian regiment, consisting of Mr. E. T. Webb, who led the attack. — Dr. Hurst, Mr. L. Edgley, J. McPhillamy and others trooped right into the thick of the enemy. Rearing himself on a forum, Mr. Webb announced very plainly that the first individual who made a public nuisance of himself would at once be arrested. This had a wonderful effect. The “push” — it would be libellous to designate them anything else — saw that business was meant and from that time out to the fall of the curtain on the last act, one could almost hear a pin drop.

It is to be hoped in the interests of the Bathurst public that the members of the police force who were quietly standing on the northern side of the pit made a mental note of the ringleaders and will, with the assistance of the committee force the delinquents to face another kind of music at the Police Court. It is to be similarly hoped also, that the committee will take such action at its next meeting to permanently stop any disgraceful tactics in the future.

Regarding the performance itself it would be impossible to fairly pass judgment up to the court scene. Mr. F. M. Alexander as “Shylock” played the avaricious old jew as it should be played. His impersonation was in every respect a fine one and the intelligent section of the audience recognised the fact. Considerable interest was manifested in the appearance of Miss Edith Tasca Page in the role of Portia. She did the part full justice, her impersonation of the doctor in the Court of Justice being one of the cleverest things seen here for some time. Mr. Collet Dobson was a manly, robust “Antonio,” and his fine acting was recognised to the full. Messrs. W. F. Elliott and Stewart Carr assumed the characters of “Bassanio” and “Lancelot Gobbo” and they filled their roles well. Miss Myra-De Lissa, “Jessica” exhibited high qualities as an artist for a lady so young and created a very favorable impression. The scenery and costumes were all that a lover of Shakespeare's plays could desire.

The first scene depicts Shylock endeavoring to delay the actual lending of money to the needy Bassanio. Antonio and Bassanio wish to complete the transaction speedily and get away — but more particularly that Shylock may be forced to make up his mind quickly as to the forfeiture. But once being decided upon that, Shylock gets the business over hurriedly, deceiving Antonio and Bassanio by his forced smile and chuckling. In this scene Shylock is all the time suppressing his rage, and during it passes with rapidity from a laughing manner to furious outbursts of rage, notably at the end of the speech: “Another time you called me dog — and for these courtesies I'll lend you thus much moneys.” At the words: “You called me,” — he stopshocked and then controlled himself by sheer force of will and remarks to Antonio: “I would friends with you” [*sic*; J.S.] and having settled he upon the pound of flesh scheme practices his deception with success upon him.

In the second scene, Jessica and Lancelot are seen together and old Shylock is full of suspicion for he exclaims “There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest for I did dream of money-bags to-night.” And then comes his most pathetic and touching farewell with Jessica — a splendid piece of dual acting. After Jessica's flight with

Lorenzo — who, by the way, was responsible for some excellent work — Shylock is seen returning from Bassanio's feast. He happens on the keys which Jessica had previously, in a state of excitement dropped. He rushes into the house, calls her, then returns to the stage in a perfect fury, bringing an end to the second act, kneeling down with bowed head convulsed with rage. Mr. Alexander was responsible in this scene for some powerful acting.

The next act opens with the great trial. Antonio, Portia and Shylock here assist in the creation of a thrilling scene. Shylock almost mad with rage passes through the whole of the scale of dramatic expression ending in a fury with the words "At our Synagogue Tubal." Here we have the depths of pathos; his hatred for the Christian, the love of his daughter, likewise his anger at her flight, and his sad, sad pathos and tears when he learns that Jessica gave away his wife's last gift (a ring) for a monkey. In tears he mutters: "I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys." Shylock is confident of his arguments, and is determined to have his pound of flesh, believing that it is right he should have it. With all the care of a great advocate he conducts his case, dwelling upon the points. When Portia interposes that the bond must be kept and the forfeit paid, exultantly he cries, "A Daniel came to justice." When, however, the judgment is announced against him he gradually breaks down until he sinks to the ground. Afterwards he pathetically disappears from sight.

Portia, in the first scene, has little to do except tell of some of the peculiarities of her suitors. In one scene this beautiful creature of Shakespeare's creation is seated in the centre of a room watching her lover making his risky choice and during this time her face is a study and the expression of love to help him are all passing in proper order. This lady has a beautiful voice, splendid stage presence and a charm and dignity of manner that makes her an ideal Portia. In the Trial Scene, as the woman advocate, she appeals to Shylock in every manner possible, but to no avail.

In the concluding act this lady enters with the frolic of a school girl and yet retains that distinctness of manner which Portia possesses. The curtain is rung down on a particularly happy re-union. (*The Bathurst Daily Free Press and Mining Journal*, 1902).

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