

Luisa Tetrazzini

Introductory Sketch of the Career of the Famous Italian Prima Donna Who Is the Author of "Talks on Singing."

LUISA TETRAZZINI, the most famous Italian coloratura soprano of the day, declares that she began to sing before she learned to talk. Her parents were not musical, but her elder sister, now the wife of the eminent conductor Cleofante Campanini, was a public singer of established reputation, and her success roused her young sister's ambition to become a great artist. Her parents were well to do, her father having a large army furnishing store in Florence, and they did not encourage her in her determination to become a prima donna. One prima donna, said her father, was enough for any family. Luisa did not agree with him. If one prima donna is good, she argued, why would not two be better? So she never desisted from her importunity until she was permitted to become a pupil of Professor Cocherani, vocal instructor at the Lyceum. At this time she had committed to memory more than a dozen grand opera roles, and at the end of six months the professor confessed that he could do nothing more for her voice; that she was ready for a career.

She made her bow to the Florentine opera going public, one of the most critical in Italy, as Inez in Meyerbeer's "L'Africaine," and her success was so pronounced that she was engaged at a salary of \$100 a month, a phenomenal beginning for a young singer. Queen Margherita was present on the occasion and complimented her lightly and prophesied for her a great career. She asked the trembling debutante how old she was, and in the embarrassment of



MME. LUISA TETRAZZINI.

the moment Luisa made herself six years older than she really was. This is one noteworthy instance in which a public singer failed to discount her age.

Fame came speedily, but for a long time it was confined to Europe and Latin America. She sang seven seasons in St. Petersburg, three in Mexico, two in Madrid, four in Buenos Aires and even on the Pacific coast of America before she appeared in New York. She had sung Lucia more than 200 times before her first appearance at Covent Garden, and the twenty curtain calls she received on that occasion came as the greatest surprise of her career. She had begun to believe that she could never be appreciated by English speaking audiences, and the ordeal almost overcame her.

It was by the merest chance that Mme. Tetrazzini ever came to the Manhattan Opera House in New York. The diva's own account of her engagement is as follows:

"I was in London, and for a wonder I had a week, a wet week, on my hands. You know people will do anything in a wet week in London.

"There were contracts from all over the continent and South America pending. There was much discussion naturally in regard to settlements and arrangements of one kind and another.

"Suddenly, just like that,"—she makes a butterfly gesture—"M. Hammerstein came, and just like that"—a duplicate gesture—"I made up my mind that I would come here. If his offer to me had been seven days later I should not have signed, and if I had not I should undoubtedly never have come, for a contract that I might have signed to go elsewhere would probably have been for a number of years."

Voice experts confess that they are not able to solve the mystery of Mme. Tetrazzini's wonderful management of her breathing.

"It is perfectly natural," she says. "I breathe low down with the diaphragm, not, as some do, high up in the upper part of the chest. I always hold some breath in reserve for the crescendos, employing only what is absolutely necessary, and I renew the breath wherever it is easiest.

"In breathing I find, as in other matters pertaining to singing, that as one goes on and practices, no matter how long one may have been singing, there are constantly new surprises awaiting one. You may have been accustomed for years to take a note in a certain way, and after a long while you discover that, while it is a very good way, there is a better."

More Effective.

Father (anxiously)—If my son marries that adventuress I shall cut him off absolutely, and you can tell him so. Legal Adviser—I know a better plan than that—tell the girl.—Exchange.

Talks on Singing

I.—Breath Control—The Foundation of Singing.

By LUISA TETRAZZINI

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THERE is only one way to sing correctly, and that is to sing naturally, easily, comfortably. The height of vocal art is to have no apparent method, but to be able to sing with perfect facility from one end of the voice to the other, emitting all the notes clearly and yet with power and having each note of the scale sound the same in quality and tonal beauty as the ones before and after.

There are many methods which lead to the goal of natural singing—that is to say, the production of the voice with ease, beauty and with perfect control. Some of the greatest teachers in the world reach this point apparently by diverging roads.

Around the art of singing there has been formed a cult which includes an entire jargon of words meaning one thing to the singer and another thing to the rest of the world and which very often doesn't mean the same thing to two singers of different schools.

In these talks with you I am going to try to use the simplest words, and the few idioms which I will have to take from my own language I will translate to you as clearly as I can, so that there can be no misunderstanding.

Certainly the highest art and a lifetime of work and study are necessary to acquire an easy emission of tone.

There are quantities of wonderful natural voices, particularly among young people of Switzerland and Italy, and the American voice is especially noted for its purity and the beauty of its tone in the high registers. But these naturally untrained voices soon break or fall if they are used much unless the singer supplements the natural, God given vocal gifts with a conscious understanding of how the vocal apparatus should be used.

The singer must have some knowledge of his or her anatomical structure, particularly the structure of the throat, mouth and face, with its resonant cavities, which are so necessary for the right production of the voice.

Besides that, the lungs and diaphragm and the whole breathing apparatus must be understood, because the foundation of singing is breathing and breath control.

A singer must be able to rely on his breath, just as he relies upon the solidity of the ground beneath his feet.

A shaky, uncontrolled breath is like a rickety foundation on which nothing can be built, and until that foundation has been developed and strengthened the would be singer need expect no satisfactory results.

From the girls to whom I am talking especially I must now ask a sacrifice—the singer cannot wear tight corsets and should not wear corsets of any kind which come up higher than the lowest rib.

In other words, the corset must be nothing but a belt, but with as much hip length as the wearer finds convenient and necessary.

In order to insure proper breathing capacity it is understood that the clothing must be absolutely loose around the chest and also across the lower part of the body, for one should breathe with the back of the lungs as well as with the front.

In my years of study and work I have developed my own breathing capacity until I am somewhat the despair of the fashionable modiste, but I have a diaphragm and a breath on which I can rely at all times.

In hurrying to breathe it is well to think of the lungs as empty sacks, into which the air is dropping like a weight, so that you think first of filling the bottom of your lungs, then the middle part, and so on until no more air can be inhaled.

Inhale short breaths through the nose. This, of course, is only an exercise for breath development.

Now begin to inhale from the bottom of the lungs first.

Exhale slowly and feel as if you were pushing the air against your chest. If you can get this sensation later when singing it will help you very greatly to get control of the breath and to avoid sending too much breath through the vocal chords.

The breath must be sent out in an even, steady flow.

You will notice when you begin to sing, if you watch yourself very carefully, that, first, you will try to inhale too much air; secondly, you will either force it all out at once, making a breathy note, or in trying to control the flow of air by the diaphragm you will suddenly cease to send it forth at all and will be making the sound by pressure from the throat.

There must never be any pressure from the throat. The sound must be made from the continued flow of air.

You must learn to control this flow of air, so that no muscular action of the throat can shut it off.

Open the throat wide and start your notes by the pressure breath. The physical sensation should be first an effort on the part of the diaphragm to press the air up against the chest box, then the sensation of a perfectly open throat, and, lastly, the sensation that the air is passing freely into the cavities of the head.

The quantity of sound is controlled by the breath.

In diminishing the tone the opening of the throat remains the same. Only the quantity of breath given forth is diminished. That is done by the diaphragm muscles.

"Fillare la voce," to spin the voice

from a tiny little thread into a breadth of sound and then diminish again, is one of the most beautiful effects in singing.

It is accomplished by the control of the breath, and its perfect accomplishment means the complete mastery of the greatest difficulty in learning to sing.

I think one of the best exercises for learning to control the voice by first getting control of the breath is to stand erect in a well ventilated room or out of doors and slowly sniff in air through the nostrils, inhaling in little puffs, as if you were smelling something.

Take just a little bit of air at a time and feel as if you were filling the very bottom of your lungs and also the back of your lungs.

When you have the sensation of being full up to the neck retain the air for a few seconds and then very slowly send it out in little puffs again.

This is a splendid exercise, but I want to warn you not to practice any breathing exercise to such an extent that you make your heart beat fast or feel like strangling.

Overexercising the lungs is as bad as not exercising them enough, and the results are often harmful.

Like everything else in singing, you want to learn this gradually. Never neglect it, because it is the very foundation of your art. But don't try to develop a diaphragm expansion of five inches in two weeks.

Indeed, it is not the expansion that you are working for.

I have noticed this one peculiarity about young singers—if they have an enormous development of the diaphragm they think they should be able to sing, no matter what happens. A girl came to see me once whose figure was really entirely out of proportion, the lower part of the lungs having been pressed out quite beyond even artistic lines.

"You see, madam," she exclaimed, "I have studied breathing. Why, I have such a strong diaphragm I can move the piano with it!" And she did go right up to my piano and, pushing on this strong diaphragm of hers, moved the piano a fraction of an inch from its place.

I was quite aghast. I had never met such an athletic singer. When I asked her to let me hear her voice, however, a tiny stream of contralto sound issued from those powerful lungs.

She had developed her breathing capacity, but when she sang she held her breath back.

I have noticed that a great many people do this, and it is one of the things that must be overcome in the very beginning of the study of singing.

Certain young singers take in an enormous breath, stiffening every muscle in order to hold the air, thus depriving their muscles of all elasticity.

They will then shut off the throat and let only the smallest fraction of air escape, just enough to make a sound. Too much inbreathing and too violent an effort at inhaling will not help the singer at all.

People have said that they cannot see when I breathe. Well, they certainly cannot say that I am ever short of breath even if I do try to breathe invisibly. When I breathe I scarcely draw my diaphragm in at all, but I feel the air fill my lungs, and I feel my upper ribs expand.

In singing I always feel as if I were forcing my breath against my chest, and, just as in the exercises according to Delsarte you will find the chest leads in all physical movements, so in singing you should feel this firm support of the chest of the highest as well as the lowest notes.

I have seen pupils trying to master the art of breathing holding themselves as rigidly as drum majors.

Now, this rigidity of the spinal column will in no way help you in the emission of tone, nor will it increase the breath control. In fact, I don't even think it would help you to stand up straight, although it would certainly give one a stiff appearance and one far removed from grace.

A singer should stand freely and easily and should feel as if the chest were leading, but should not feel constrained or stiff in any part of the ribs or lungs.

From the minute the singer starts to emit a tone the supply of breath must be emitted steadily from the chamber of air in the lungs. It must never be held back once.

The immediate pressure of the air should be felt more against the chest. I know of a great many singers who when they come to very difficult passages put their hands on their chests, focusing their attention on this one part of the mechanism of singing.

The audience of course thinks the prima donna's hand is raised to her heart, when, as a matter of fact, the prima donna, with a different bit of singing before her, is thinking of her technique and the foundation of that technique—breath control.

This feeling of singing against the chest with the weight of air pressing up against it is known as "breath support," and in Italian we have even a better word, "appoggio," which is breath prop. The diaphragm in English may be called the bellows of the lungs, but the appoggio is the deep breath regulated by the diaphragm.

The attack of the sound must come from the appoggio, or breath prop. In attacking the very highest notes it is essential, and no singer can really get the high notes or vocal flexibility or

strength of tone without the attack coming from this seat of respiration. In practicing the trill or staccato tones the pressure of the breath must be felt even before the sound is heard. The beautiful, clear, bell-like tones that die away into a soft piano are tones struck on the appoggio and controlled by the steady soft pressure of the breath, emitted through a perfectly open throat, over a low tongue and resounding in the cavities of the mouth or head.

Never for a moment sing without this appoggio, this breath prop. Its development and its constant use mean the restoration of sick or fatigued voices and the prolonging of all one's vocal powers into what is wrongly called old age.

TETRAZZINI VERSUS MELBA.

How the Former Came, Sang and Conquered in London.

Maria Gay, the Spanish prima donna, had a clash with Melba in London two years ago. Then Melba "ruled the roost" at Covent Garden, and Gay's Spanish pride was stung. Esteeming herself to be quite as good an artist as Melba, with Spanish resentment she swore to be revenged.

Having known Tetrazzini in Spain and South America, she told the Covent Garden syndicate that Tetrazzini was a far finer artist than Melba and that if she were presented there she would make a sensation.

Believing that Gay was actuated by dislike of Melba and, furthermore, fearing to do anything calculated to antagonize that diva, the syndicate refused to have Tetrazzini's voice tested. Gay was not to be baffled. She went to the organizers of the autumn popular season of opera at Covent Garden and advised them that if they wanted to create a furore by securing a really big star they ought to engage Luisa Tetrazzini.

These gentlemen agreed to do so, thinking that if Tetrazzini was only one-tenth part as good a star as Gay pictured her she would be cheap at the salary she asked.

Tetrazzini came, sang and conquered, and Maria Gay prides herself on being the means of introducing to London what she calls "a real great artist."

After hearing Melba and Tetrazzini sing the same night at a gala performance of opera the music experts declared that Melba had the purer, even-voiced, but that Tetrazzini, while vocally slightly inferior, was artistically pre-eminent; that she had the musical soul.

TETRAZZINI AS A BABY.

She Sang Little Songs in Her Cradle Days.

Speaking of her art and how she came to follow her natural inclination, Mme. Tetrazzini said recently:

"All of my family were naturally musical, and I cannot remember when I could not sing, or at least when I did not try. My mother always told me that I learned to sing little songs in my cradle before I learned to talk.

"But with all this natural inclination I missed very narrowly turning my attention to serious effort in this direction. As I have said, my elder sister was a singer, and my parents thought that one successful singer in the family was quite all that was possible. So I did not do more than follow my natural inclination for the sake of amusement until eleven years ago.

"Then I sought out, much against the wishes of my relatives, a grand old maestro, Signor Cocherani. That was after I had moved to Milan. First I took lessons for three months. Then I discontinued my studies and engaged for a time in dramatic singing in Milan. After a time I went back to Cocherani and took lessons for three months again. Then Cocherani told me that he could not teach me any more."

Tetrazzini's Great Triumph.

The night Luisa Tetrazzini first appeared at Covent Garden, London, little had been done to herald her coming. To the management she was just a good singer who would please, and so they advertised her. But when she came upon the stage, a perfect stranger to her audience, it was immediately felt that she was a prima donna far out of the ordinary. And when she had finished singing she got encore after encore, and as she emerged from the stage door she found the whole audience awaiting to greet her.

Men and women of fashion the assemblage was for the most part, but in their enthusiasm they had transformed themselves into a plain mob, and nothing would satisfy them except that the horses should be taken out of the singer's carriage and that they should draw it through the streets to her hotel.

Tetrazzini's husband tried to dissuade the crowd, and for his pains he sustained a fracture of one of his arms and had to stand idly by while the audience carried out its purpose and dragged the carriage off to Mme. Tetrazzini's hotel.

That was just the beginning of the sensation. From that time forward the Covent Garden was jammed to its capacity when she sang.

A Cheerful Greeting.

Augustus—Hello, old man! How are you and how are your people and all that sort of silly stuff?—London Globe.

A good conscience is to the mind what health is to the body.—Addison.

Country Folk Are Tender With Birds.

Real country folk are very tender in their dealings with the birds that live near them. In the course of my experience, extending over many years, I have never known a case of wanton cruelty occur in regard to wild birds.

The laboring man, whose work is of ten times far from the haunts of men, seeks companionship with the birds. Of these none is more friendly than the robin, which is sure to appear, however lonely the place.—Cornhill Magazine.

LAFOLLETTE AND PENROSE TILT

Stormy Debate Precedes Passage of Postoffice Bill.

HEPBURN HITS HOUSE RULES

Declares Speaker Has Been Made a Tyrant—Bill Codifying and Amending Penal Laws Is Passed—Fortifications Appropriation Measure Up.

Washington, Feb. 19.—The postoffice bill, carrying appropriations of \$232,000,000, was passed by the senate after a stormy debate, during which Senator Penrose, in charge of the measure, made an angry assault upon Senator LaFollette, who had entered into a general criticism of the senate committees because of what he termed their unwarranted delay in reporting great appropriation bills. LaFollette declared the senate had permitted a glut of important legislation to be disposed of in haste during the last days of congress, and had suggested that it would be no calamity if these bills could not be acted upon in the regular session, saying that a reorganization of committees would allow the special session to consider them and other important legislation.

Responding in angry tones, Penrose declared LaFollette's criticisms sounded more like the arguments "made by a vendor of a patent medicine from the tail door of a cart in a village of Wisconsin," than those of a senator of the United States. The colloquy was rendered almost tragic by the fiery attitude assumed by the senator from Pennsylvania as he denounced the senator from Wisconsin, who stood quietly at his place on the other side of the chamber staring back at his big antagonist.

Fortifications Bill in the House.

The controversy over the legislative appropriation bill in connection with the much discussed salary of the secretary of state involving the eligibility of Senator Knox for the office was settled in the house of representatives when the bill was sent to conference and the committee authorized to consider the salary provisions as in disagreement. This gives the committee power to reduce the pay from \$12,000 to \$8,000, its former figure. The Republicans were caught napping when a resolution by Fitzgerald was adopted disagreeing to the senate amendments creating the offices of under secretary and fourth assistant secretary of state.

The bill codifying and amending the penal laws of the United States was passed and the fortifications appropriation bill discussed. Vigorous attacks on the house rules were made by Hubbard and Hepburn (La.). The latter asserted that members had betrayed their trust and prostrated themselves at the feet of the speaker, who, he said, had been made a tyrant.

MOVE IN HOUSE TO RAISE MAINE

Committee Will Include Item for Commission to Investigate Feasibility.

Washington, Feb. 19.—The house committee on appropriations is to include in the sundry civil bill an item looking toward the ultimate raising of the battleship Maine, the wreck of which still remains in Havana harbor. The subcommittee which is preparing the bill has decided to insert a clause which provides for a commission which will be directed to investigate the condition of the wreck and determine the feasibility and cost of raising it.

Stringent Liquor Law in Kansas.

Topeka, Feb. 19.—What is probably the most stringent legislation enacted in any state in the union to prevent the sale of intoxicating liquors was passed by the house. The bill had already passed the senate. The bill absolutely prohibits the issuance of permits to druggists to sell liquor and in connection with the prohibition law in force is absolutely prohibitive.

INDIAN AMUCK IN CINCINNATI

Fatally Stabs Two Persons and Seriously Cuts Another.

Cincinnati, Feb. 22.—With an ear splitting warwhoop, an unidentified Navajo Indian war chief ran amuck in the Union station here and before he could be overpowered he had fatally stabbed and cut Mrs. Anna Devoy of Huntington, W. Va., and Max Meyers of Cincinnati and seriously wounded Joseph B. Gordon of Cambridge, Ill.

The Indiana, with four Sioux war chiefs from Kansas, had alighted from a crowded train. As the passengers alighted from the train the Indian, with a warning yell, drew a long dagger and started toward the crowd, slashing right and left.

Mrs. Devoy was nearest to the Indian, walking up the platform with a child in her arms. Before she could head the warning cry raised by passengers the Indian had buried the dagger in her back and then slashed her across the body and arms.

Disregarding the insensible form of his victim, the Indian next attacked Meyers. As Meyers fell to the station platform the Indian ran toward Gordon. As the Indian's blade penetrated the clothing of the victim and entered the flesh, passengers and station attendants, who had stood rooted in their tracks with horror, made a concerted rush on the madman. The dagger was knocked from his hand and he was taken in charge by the police.

On the train the Indian, who had been to Washington to see the secretary of the interior, was noticed by passengers to be brooding and sulky.

BOSTON DOG SHOW TONIGHT

Some of Country's Best Known Canines Placed on Exhibition.

Boston, Feb. 22.—The last of the three great dog shows of the east was opened here today. Although the Boston show is not as large as the New York and Philadelphia exhibitions, it is of great interest to lovers of the canine.

The show will last four days. Some of the best known animals in the country are on exhibition, and visitors are expected from many states. The present is the twenty-fifth annual bench show of the New England Kennel club.

PIN CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH IS ON TONIGHT

Best Men of New York and Cleveland to Roll in Brooklyn.

New York, Feb. 22.—The opening games in the match between the bowling champions of New York and Cleveland, O., will be rolled on the Grand Central alleys in Brooklyn tonight, and the popularity of the alley game in New York is showing itself in the interest taken in the match. Jimmy Smith, the New York champion, is to meet Louis Franz, the best bowler of the Ohio city, in a home and home tournament. Thirty games are to be rolled, the first fifteen in Brooklyn tonight and the other fifteen in Cleveland on March 12.

Franz has been champion of Cleveland for three years. He is as good a bowler when working in a team as in singles, as he proved lately when he and Charley Gilbert won an inter-city match rolled against Will Plummer and Gus Steele, two of Chicago's best men on the alleys. Cleveland bowlers are enthusiastic about Franz's ability, declaring that he will prove himself the best bowler of America. A number of them have come on here to see him roll against Smith. The latter is generally considered the best bowler of the metropolis. In a recent workout in preparation for tonight's match he rolled an average of nine games of 233, beginning with a 300 score. It is reported that he has done even better. The match is for \$500 a side, in addition to a share of the gate receipts.

J. EDWARD BRITT AGAIN.

He Fights Johnny Summers in London Ring Tonight.

London, Feb. 22.—Patriotic American sports in London will celebrate Washington's birthday by going to see Jimmy Britt, the California lightweight, fight Johnny Summers, the Englishman, at the National Sporting club—that is, if they have the place, for the National Sporting club is one of the ancient institutions of the British capital and admission within its doors comes high.

The Yankees here are sure, of course, that Britt will make Summers' seconds throw up the sponge, but there may be a surprise coming to them. Summers is a clever, hardy little scrapper who has whipped some good Americans and Britishers, and he may take Britt's measure tonight. The fight is scheduled to go twenty rounds for a purse of \$4,000, in addition to a side bet of \$500.

Severe Earth Shocks in Spain.

Alicante, Spain, Feb. 22.—Severe earthquake shocks were experienced throughout the whole district of Elche. The most serious disturbance, which came while the people were assembled at mass in the village church, caused a panic among the congregation, who rushed to the doors, throwing down and trampling under foot a score or more of women and children. Houses rocked and swayed.

Emperor Ferdinand Visits Czar.

St. Petersburg, Feb. 22.—Emperor Ferdinand of Bulgaria arrived here on an imperial train, which brought him from the frontier. He accompanied Grand Duke Constantine in a carriage to the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, whither Emperor Nicholas had proceeded a short time before.

Spitzbergen Conference.

London, Feb. 22.—The conference of the powers in reference to the control of Spitzbergen has now been definitely fixed to meet in Christiania, on Feb. 25. Delegates will attend from America, Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia, Sweden and Norway.

ULTIMATUM TO PIERCE COMPANY

Must Sever Relations With Standard or Quit Missouri.

Jefferson City, Mo., Feb. 20.—Attorney General Major declared that the relations of the Waters-Pierce Oil company and the Standard Oil company must be severed if the Waters-Pierce company expects to do business in Missouri, unless the supreme court holds that the Waters-Pierce company has complied with its order and unless the court modifies the judgment of the Standard Oil company, which is already ousted. He contends that the Waters-Pierce Oil company has not complied with the order and decree of the supreme court.

Attorneys in Calhoun Case Clash.

San Francisco, Feb. 20.—Recalling the attempted assassination of last November, Francis J. Heney charged that Henry Ach, attorney for Abraham Ruef, the convicted political boss, knew of the intention of Morris Huns to shoot the prosecutor. The accusation was being at the attorneys for the defense during a heated exchange. The session resumed its calmness after Judge Lawler had threatened the belligerent attorneys with imprisonment. A single seat in the jury remains to be filled.

Notice to Bridge Contractors.

Public notice is hereby given that sealed bids will be received by the board of county commissioners of Madison county, Nebraska, for the furnishing of all the necessary materials and labor for the erection and completion of the following bridges, or so many thereof as shall be ordered built by the said county commissioners during the year beginning March 30, 1909, and ending March 29, 1910:

One 16-foot roadway, 70-foot span steel bridge with tubular piers, across Little creek, near John Pranner's farm in Schoolcraft precinct.

And such other bridges of like class as above, ranging in spans from 50 to 80 feet, as necessity or emergency may require to be ordered by said board of county commissioners, within the period herein specified.

One 15-foot roadway, pile and stringer bridge, approximately 32 feet long, near John Braun's farm in Highland precinct.

All such other bridges of like class as the bridge last described, as necessity or emergency may require to be ordered by said county commissioners within the period herein specified.

At the same time and place as herein specified bids will also be received by said county commissioners for a yearly contract for the repair of all bridges and approaches to bridges which may be ordered repaired and maintained by said county commissioners during the period above specified.

All such bridges and parts of bridges to be built in accordance with plans and specifications heretofore adopted by said county commissioners and now on file in the office of county clerk of said county at Madison, Nebraska.

No bid will be considered unless it is accompanied by a certified check for \$2,000 payable to the county clerk of Madison county, Nebraska, which shall be forfeited to the county of Madison in case the successful bidder refuses to enter into a contract if the same shall be awarded to him. Such check must be under separate cover that it may be examined and verified by the county clerk prior to the opening of said bids.