

*The Violinist*  
 October 1909  
 also in *Musical Standard*, 1907

### WOMEN VIOLINISTS SHOULD MAKE BEDS

If, being a woman, you're all run down and your nerves are simply driving you crazy, make your own bed after a sleepless night. Shake the sheets, pat the pillows. If you can bite the pillowcase and then run clear around the bed to smooth the crease of the northeast corner of the top sheet, so much the better. Because it's all exercise; and, in the opinion of Mme. Maud Powell, the best exercise in the world to cure fagged nerves.

"Making beds is fine exercise for feminine musicians," declares this greatest of women violinists.

"Still," she observed, adjusting a stray lock of black hair with the end of her diamond-studded bow, "still, I don't know that I'd recommend it for a housemaid or farmer's wife. But for the multitude of women that haven't the good fortune to be kept well by a reasonable amount of active exercise about their homes – for women with too many servants, women with too much society, or with club duties, literary or artistic pursuits to occupy their minds and tantalize their nerves – there's nothing better than simply making beds.

"I know because I've tried it, and I've tried the more pretentious, fashionable and expensive cures as well. When I got back from England, some time ago, I was a wreck – simply a wreck."

The intonation of this statement was that of some scarcely-breathing graduate from a Siberian prison, but the speaker was so fresh, youthful and energetic – so comely also, as every concert-goer knows – that she might sell her portraits to advertise a breakfast food.

"I was, really," she protested. "I was a well-nigh perfect ruin as to nerves. I went to a German doctor in New York whom a friend recommended. 'So?' he exclaimed, when I told him that I might as well be buried at once.

"Then he asked if 'the frau had the beds ge-made.' No, she hadn't; certainly not. 'Aber the frau should the beds make – all of them in the house, not one only.' Well, I went home and made beds and kept making them, and it did me a hundred times more good than tablets, motor-caring, the rest-cure and the Riviera.

"You see, violin playing is hard on any woman or man; it twists the left arm around snake-fashion; it kinks the spine a trifle, compresses the chest, and throws all the exercise upon

the right arm. Women, especially girls, who aren't strong, should not take up the 'fiddle.' The closeness of the sound and the vibration to the left ear also tries the nerves. But the woman strong enough to learn the violin has special advantages. Her touch is more delicate than a man's; her ear is often truer; she more quickly masters the technique. After that it's a difference of individuals, not of sex."

*From the Archive of The Maud Powell Society for Music and Education*