

A PLEA FOR MUSIC.

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A P L E A F O R M U S I C .

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"As the guardian angel is said to follow us through life, so music seems to be ever with us in our journey from the cradle to the grave." She sings beside our cradle, she kneels before the door of our tomb. In religion and in war she is ever present. At the dance and at the banquet, at every solemnity and at every feast. The songs of childhood, the songs which our mothers sang; who can be forgetful of their charm. The very youngest child is lulled and cheered by song before it knows the meaning of spoken words. When loves gentle impulse for the first time takes possession of the heart, the maiden gives expression to them in song, while the youthful lover delights in a serenade. It is hard to decide which is the mightier music or love. When listening with a believing mind and a feeling heart to the soft melody of the organ, the strains of the choir and the mighty song of the congregation, our souls are lifted upward on the wings of song until in the imagination we are in the blessed realms above.

Music appeals to the better class of feelings as does nothing else. It has little or no power to arouse the uglier emotions. There is nothing stronger than music to make the sad joyful, the joyful sad, and the timid bold, to charm the haughty to humility, to calm and quite excessive love, to lessen envy, and hatred. Tears have been started, hearts softened, sorrows stilled, religion deepened, aspiration awakened by music, but there never was and never can be written a strain of music which would excite the passion of greed, avarice, gluttony, angry or envy in the listener.

It is through music that we communicate, or best of all commune with nature, for nature is the best musician, and he who has eyes to see but no lass to her beauties is in danger of never really knowing her. Music has been called "The Language of Heaven." It might, perhaps better be said, music is the language of nature. The

words sing in their own way; and no æolian harp orchestra, or chorus makes such music as the wind swept woods, singing brooks, and the perpetual diapason of the floods, the water falls and the sea waves.

The most beautiful music is that which comes from the heart and goes to the heart. Whether the music be expression of joy, sensual or spiritual the heart at least will understand it. Music seems to be the only language that can perfectly express the internal emotions. The immediate effect is communicated from heart to heart, and these being the expression of some inward passion, the mind cannot explain them. The heart must be the only interpreter.

Music must commune directly with the heart. It is the most subjective and most intense of all arts. Music expresses emotions, but cannot describe scenes and situations.

Study music in order to beautify your own heart, and beautify your own heart in order to make this world more beautiful to others.

Music expresses no definite ideas, but is a language. Without language we could not be the human beings we are. Language gives expression to thoughts, and because men are differently constituted, we have a great diversity of dialects. The emotional world also needs a language. All human hearts are akin in their feelings, all humanity feels alike. Music the language of the emotions is the language of the heart. This language of the heart, this music, brings all humanity into one household. It is the language of the brotherhood of man, while literature brings us only together in the republic of letters.

When the bugle call is heard by the soldier, the sound enters his innermost nature. These strains speak to him alternately of security and danger, of quiet calm life and of terrible strife. When the old war songs are sung before our veterans notice the effect. One

becomes excited and chimes in, while the other settles down into quiet attitude and tears stream down his cheeks. These songs have been the means of cheer on many weary marches. They have often inspired the fighting soldiers when almost ready to give up in the face of stronger forces. How sad a dirge appeals to us when played over the grave of a departed comrade. The greater the liberty enjoyed by a people the more character does their song have. Music at all times bears the seal of independence, servitude, misery or happiness according to the condition of the nation which cultivates it. Savages have but one kind of music, that of nature. Civilized nations have two; the popular or national, and the music of the so-called cultivated circles. One is simple or lively, gay, melancholy or dreamy, just in accordance with the character of the nation. The other on the contrary is studied and formal, soft and tender or stiff and harsh according to the ways and habits of those among whom it is cultivated.

Education, no matter how powerfully it may effect the melody of the people can never quite destroy its national character.

Music is one of the chief joys of those unfortunate, who are confined within the walls of insane asylums, and it is a fact but little known, and far too little appreciated by our medical profession that many a shattered mind has been restored to reason through the soothing influence of music. Who can imagine a fourth of July celebration without music. What language is so powerful to keep alive affections and pleasant remembrance of our birthplace as that of music? The strongest heart that has endured many trials and braved many dangers, the heart that has learned to govern its emotions, yields to the sweet strains of the little tune, "Home Sweet Home," and the simple strains have been the means of bringing many a wayward wanderer home again. When a young couple is about to take

upon themselves the solemn marriage vow, the brilliant wedding march is almost certain to be a part of the ceremonies, and when they have advanced in life until their hair is white they listen with indescribable emotions to the songs of old. The dear old songs how easily they lead us along life pathways.

The power of music over human emotions was acknowledged long before we have any traces of its beginning as an art. Music owes its evolution entirely to man. It is sensuous and spiritual. Its direct appeal is made to the auditory nerve; but it has certain qualities which penetrate beyond and reach an aesthetic faculty called the soul. "It hath a sweetness and utility and glorifieth God, purifieth our hearts, elevateth our contemplations, and helpeth to make us wise unto salvation." Music is one of the most glorious gifts of God. It removes from the heart the weight of sorrows and the fascination of evil thoughts. The lowest influence of music is merely a pleasurable sensation. Music excites emotions independently of all other aid. It moves us and we know not why. We shed tears and we can not trace their source.

Music has a higher mission than merely to please the ear. It is the art which appeals most powerfully to the heart, and through this affects our character. It has a high moral influence in the family. A musical home is a happy home. Ill natured people rarely love music, and can this class of people make a happy home? But, then if music once penetrates the heart's feelings, it drives out ugliness and ill nature. Ill nature and music cannot exist together, for the heart that comes under the spell of good music is thereby made ready for good deeds. Music is a means to refine and to elevate social solitude. But if music is a social art, if it inspires numbers, it is also a true friend. In fact it is best felt when alone, just as the most fervent prayers are offered in private. It is good for us to

seek solitude, it is beneficial for us to meditate. We as true lovers of music can conceive of no greater pleasure, than to express our emotions upon an instrument unheard by man. Go in the evening to the doors of musicians rooms and listen, and there you will hear their hearts' best emotions poured out upon their instruments. When in the twilight hours, there comes a feeling of yearning, a feeling of loneliness, we can find no words to express our emotions, but through the medium of music we can tell all we feel, and in the expression of our inmost emotions we find relief.

Music is love. The love power speaks out of music, and it is the one force that leads us all. What is greater than love? Love is the all ruling principle; without it the true, the just, the beautiful are not possible. The heart is the living power in man, and love is its center; it is the motor of the world. Music being love, who can dispute its mighty power. Love and music are closely allied. "They are the two wings of the soul." Weber said, "What love is to man, that music is to the arts, for it is love itself. Love also is the essence of religion, hence they are closely allied. Every good piece of music, therefore, is religious for it expresses love. Therefore, let us study music intelligently, and then enjoy it as a blessing. Let us view this art from its sacred side, and we will be fitted to use our attainments as a blessing to others as well as ourselves.