

Educational Notes

SCHOOL MUSIC.

A Valuable and a Necessary Thing in Public Schools.

Unlike a little learning, a little music is not a dangerous thing. Whether deep or not, only drink at this Pierian spring. Music, by some, is a subject too trivial for any serious consideration. They think it a cult for the delectation of ladies and gentlemen and the superciliously refined. An accomplishment for the use and benefit of the leisure loving and lazy. A medium, expressive of that which common mortals do not possess. A something ethereal and not of the earth earthy. A luxury, and so far as it relates to the common school, a fad.

No doubt, in many cases, these bizarre conclusions and beliefs are determined through a syllogistical mode of reasoning. For example, Mr. A is peculiar, odd and cranky. Mr. A is a student of music, consequently to profess much music, argues one's liability to become peculiar, cranky and odd. Or, music is recommended as wholesome for the weak-minded. Music is recommended as good for the public schools, therefore music might be recommended as a subject fit for weak-minded public schools. Or, schools have to do with geography, grammar, history, arithmetic and spelling. Music has little or nothing to do with geography, grammar, history, arithmetic and spelling. Therefore music should have little or nothing to do with public schools. Or lastly some boys and girls, who are particularly fond of music often show but little aptitude in the more solid branches of learning, consequently the study of music would be but little appreciated by the intellectually bright boys and girls of the schools.

Just so senseless and devoid of reason and judgment as are the preceding consideration, equally so insipid or platitudinous are the following reflections of some musical enthusiasts. For say they, music is language of the emotions and has to do with the feelings. It is a language of the heart. It is that vague something which may convey to the mind the gray twilight of the dawning morn, or perhaps it may bring to the mind's eye the iridescent hues of the setting sun, or probably reminds one of the ineffable sweetness of a lover's moonlight sheening on the bosom of some limpid gurgling stream.

Now, somewhere between these extremes of musical effusions, the value of music in schools may be found. School music is a practical, sensible subject and is worthy of our most serious considerations. In a system of graded schools, music is a necessity. It is an organizer, a disciplinarian, a peacemaker and a telltale. It produces a good healthful sentiment in the school system, assuages and elevates the lower propensities of the mind, cultivates and establishes a more agreeable environ-

ment. The teacher herself did not profess the art. The otherwise than beautiful was quite manifest. A disappointed, dejected looking teacher, and a pouty, sullen, morose appearing set of boys and girls sat facing each other. The scene was neither ethical nor aesthetical. There was a musical reason for the failure. The whole set had made a collision in the romantic art. The beautiful in spirit had fled. The class was being disciplined for its failure in the morning lesson. For punishment, the pupils were veritably singing for their dinner, for the clock was showing nearly the noon hour. Empty stomachs, tired brains and a prevalence of ill humor were surely enough to drive the spirit of the beautiful from the room, when any one of these factors is a good worker for the evil genius of the ugly and the bad. Music at that particular time and serving in that particular function, was contrapuntally speaking, unharmonical, and at least not productive of ethical influence. Discipline, productive of emotions, not aesthetical, cannot be applied for the benefit of music. The very idea itself is unmusical. The spirit of music is automatic in the rectification of its faults and will propose the appropriate corrections.

Successful music instruction tacitly implies that the general mind of room and the mind of the instructor are working harmoniously together. Successful music instruction compels this reciprocity in kindly feelings. Could anything else do so well as this? Is it not ethical? Is it not good? For, said a grade teacher, referring to a mischievous whisperer seated by her side, "this boy really loves his music." He says "when he sings it just makes him feel good all over." No doubt in this particular case music had some redeeming influence with that teacher for that boy. It is used as something of a psychical bumper interposed for future psychical clashes, or oil for the troubled waters in some psychical storm. Hence music will by its silent potent influence make conduct better, pupils happier, teachers more pleasant, and school system more refined where otherwise there might dwell germs of continual strife.

Another manner in which music acts in an ethical sense, but on the same principle, is the sense of satisfaction or relief it affords to the mind in those days of dream life which naturally come to boys and girls during the period of development. Many educators complain of this time as the most trying and exasperating, and that the pupils are more sentimental, thoughtless, heedless, silly, impetuous and unwilled, than in any period of the school age. In this age the emotions receive new impetuses, the imagination reaches greater heights, conceptions are strengthened and perceptions sharpened. At no other time of life has music such a strong influence.

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The general mind of the school is an entity. It possesses a judgment, known as sentiment or what in the universal mind, is commonly called public opinion. The school room is one factor in a school system, its mind one factor in the general mind and its sentiment one factor of the general sentiment. This entity with its general sentiment can be materially affected by means of music. The successful instruction in music implies nothing more or less than the practical application of the beautiful to the child's mind. For the meaning of the term beautiful and its application having an ethical influence, we reckon together all that which is pleasing in sensations, contentful and satisfactory in contemplation and that which tends to inspire and kindle the divine glow. It embraces the graceful and the lovely, the harmonious and the regular, the moderate and the symmetrical and the sense of unity.

Successful music instruction induces sobriety, thoughtfulness, implicit obedience to authority and harmony in actions of the individuals. No instructor, however successful in other branches of learning, can teach a vocal lesson while out of humor or gives evidence of a peevish or fretful state of mind. Cheerfulness and a placid temperament is taken for granted. The irritable do find music time the most dreadful part of the day's program. Music in its way is a veritable task-master, a dictator. Its dictum is that the participants must be agreeable and pleasant and kindly and good if its influence finds an abiding place in the school room. The reason is logical. Harmony is established and a preception of the beautiful is realized.

Imagine a class being disciplined for a bad music lesson. What punishment would be administered and how would it be done? Of course individual meanness can be easily rectified, but that indefinite, untouchable reticence of the general mind, what would you do with it in a music lesson? Once a certain class had a miserable time of it. They did not try. It was in a two part exercise. The teacher was in a quandary. The boys wouldn't sing, so the

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Again and lastly music is a beautiful manifestation of the inner consciousness of men. It is a direct product of that philosophy, the genius of which is the spirit of him who brought "peace on earth and good will 'o men." It is a christian art. Not because we find it in our religious services, but because our religion would soon become unreligious without it. Thus we believe that music has an ethical influence by carrying the sense of the beautiful into the school room, compels a working with the good and acquaints the mind with the true.

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A Great Sermon.

Prof. Arnold Tompkins, of the university occupied the pulpit at the Presbyterian church Sunday morning. He chose as the subject of his sermon; "The Brotherhood of Man" and he handled it in a master style. He used no notes, yet during his entire talk he did not once appear at a loss in selecting the most choice language in which to array his excellent logic. The universal verdict is that it was one of the best sermons ever heard in the church and Presbyterians know good sermons when they hear them for they have them every Sunday morning by the regular pastor, G. W. McNutt.