

Every one has some idea of the beautiful, even though the standard of taste be low, and *such* feelings are the long steps of the ladder which raises that standard to a loftier height; placing the pure and beautiful on their proper eminence, while the unlovely and deformed are covered and concealed.

That an ungainly house, however commodious, is not readily chosen as a residence; that a room without pictures seems barely furnished to the accustomed eye; that a home without music is a lonely, silent place—these facts prove the intimate connection existing between the Fine Arts and Domestic Life. Their relation is not that of a river running through the land, and diverging neither to right nor left from its allotted course, but it is like a thread of silk which one has woven into material of a coarser kind, not in one direction, but in all, softening and enriching the whole fabric.

The effects of Art upon the mind of man can be estimated only to a limited degree. All may see, however, how greatly it helps to make the home attractive, and thus reacts upon the mind. Amusement and instruction are two of man's mental requirements which, if not found in the home circle, will be sought elsewhere; refining, beautifying influences must pervade the Domestic Life, if the nature is to be beautified and refined. These, then, being the requirements of the mind, how far does Art promote or retard their fulfillment?

It would be idle to deny the good effects of music in a home; none can doubt that it meets a want of the human mind, not only where the sonatas of Beethoven and Mozart are appreciated, not alone where the finest musicians are to be found—but *everywhere*, where there are "young hearts, hot and restless," answering to the wild passion of its tones; *everywhere* where its soothing, quiet strains fall upon old hearts "subdued and slow." It may be that this feeling is more universal than it is generally deemed by musical connoisseurs. Passages which will excite in the cultivated a fever of admiration, may pass unnoticed by the crowd, whose hearts, *nevertheless*, will ache under a plainer tune, or quiver at the crash of simpler chords. Altogether apart, however, from this sympathy, there is a charm in the rhythm which runs through music; its regular emphasis; its steady rise and fall of

tone. Children, on hearing it, sway themselves to and fro, irresistibly accommodating their motions to its beat; men and women, too, feel the same impulse, and though the usages of society may forbid any outward manifestation, the effort necessary to preserve perfect composure goes far to prove that the pleasure and excitement it produces are universal.

In homes of average refinement vocal music is more highly appreciated than instrumental. The thought that is embodied in the latter is but dimly perceived, and frequently confuses rather than pleases; but in a song, that thought interpreted, given in words which are used in every day's experience, is easily grasped, and becomes a source of unmixed pleasure. Little songs! simple little songs, set to a simpler tune, now gay and joyful, running over with the sweet pathos of love; now full of woe, telling of the broken heart, filling the listener with the pleasing pain we feel when it is "only the sorrow of others casts its shadow over us." What a wonderful power have those little songs! How they are called for over and over again; listened to with unwearied pleasure; applauded with unabated zeal. Sometimes an old, quivering voice will join in with the young, fresh tones, contrasting so sadly, yet so sweetly; sometimes, to please an old man's fancy, the songs of fifty years ago are sung by the children of the present, testifying to the power of music upon the aged; testifying also to its power of association, for in the songs one has heard in youth are wrapped up all the feelings, the memories, of early life.

Have not these melodies a power for good in a home? The lowliest may find pleasure in them, the simplest may love and understand. How much more must this be the case where the grander music, the finished performer, the richer voice, appeal to the more cultivated taste, the more refined sympathy?

This pleasure is not for the listener alone; it belongs equally to the performer. As Kingsley has it, "Music is like mercy, it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." To him who has an innate consciousness of his own power, who, though devoid of conceit, feels *that* within him which *cannot* be denied, there is an intoxication of enjoyment in the power of creating harmonious