

THE DESIRABILITY OF HAVING MUSIC TAUGHT IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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Our public schools should not be too utilitarian in their scope. Those who advocate practical or scientific studies exclusively make a palpable mistake. They forget that as a complete organ has many stops, so the perfectly educated man is he the various sides of whose nature have been developed harmoniously. Where the time of a child at school is necessarily limited, it should doubtless be taken up chiefly with studies calculated to fit it to make its way through life and to procure the means of existence. To meet cases of this sort, it might be well if certain studies were made optional, so that in no case need the rudiments of knowledge be neglected.

Among the studies some would consider ornamental, and which might be left to the option of teachers and pupils, I would not include vocal music. That study, in my opinion, deserves a permanent place on the curriculum of studies.

It is hardly worth while to argue what no one denies—namely, the physical advantages of vocal music. I prefer to treat the matter from other stand-points. The general cultivation of music would tend to modify the frantic and absorbing worship at the shrines of mammon too often observed. The feverish search after wealth in many cases eats up all noble sentiments. Men actually come to believe that happiness is to be found in riches. The Apostle was not astray when he set down the golden mean between riches and poverty as the safest and best estate for man. That music does wage successful war with emotions of an entirely sordid character, the experience of many will demonstrate. Who is there

that at some time or another has not in hearing some exquisite harmony, some "breathing strains" of a cathedral organ, some gifted daughter of song, been filled with unutterable thoughts and unspeakable aspirations for that which is higher and nobler? And are we not made better by every good aspiration to which we give hospitality, as well as by every good action we are enabled to perform?

The study of music would enliven our schools. An interstice in the series of studies for a hearty chorus would clear the cobwebs from the often overtaxed brains of the little searchers after knowledge. Change is rest. A teacher who speaks from experience informs me that he finds it much easier by teaching music to get along comfortably with his pupils.

The homes of Canada would be brighter and happier were there more music in them. One of the best ways of emptying the saloons and billiard rooms is by adding to the attractiveness of the home circle. What is pleasanter on a winter evening—in passing a dwelling through the windows of which gleam light and cheerfulness and coziness—than to hear the voice of song stealing into the air?

How much all our churches need better music! How often is the cultivated ear pained by jangling discords and irregular time! How few take part in the service of song in the House of the Lord, compared with the number who ought to do so! Are flatness and false time in hymns, psalms and chants any proof of superior piety? Is there any ground for the practical assumption on the part of many that the Lord disapproves of correct harmony and accurate time?