

Music as an Educator.

If the mind travel back as far as possible into the past age, if it search from the nearest corner of the globe to the farthest, there will be found one element of human nature everywhere and at all times present. This faculty of mankind, which has existed through all ages down to the present, and is to be found in all races, is a capacity for music.

Music in some degree seems as natural to every race as it does to breathe. It has been said, "Vocal music in some form is as natural to man as for a cat to purr or a lion to roar." Has this universal gift of producing or interpreting music been granted to us only to be used as a pleasure, simply to enhance the æsthetic side of life? Can no practical, lasting benefit be derived from music? In short is there no educating power in music?

The term music must be defined more exactly than it usually is. As it is generally understood by the popular mind it is an agreeable combination of sounds, which pleases the ear and excites the fancy. It is a pastime and an accomplishment. If it cannot be raised to a higher level than this, it can never be placed on an equal footing with other studies as an educator.

But it is defined as "The science and art of tones," "The science of harmonical tones," and antiquity gives us authority for placing it among the sciences, for in the beginning of musical research, in 570 B.C., it was ranked by Pythagoras as one of the sciences.

In the last days of ancient Rome schools are found in whose curriculum theoretical music, in the form of harmony, rhythm and metrics, has an equal rank with mathematics and physics. Thus music must be admitted to be a science, and it is from this standpoint that it must be viewed as an educator. Are minds trained in the same way by the science of music as by mathematics or the physical sciences? Is the same mental drill and quickness of perception possible by this means? It is generally understood that if one has not much mental acumen, or is too indolent to exercise the intellect he has, still he may do something with music. This might possibly be true from a lower standpoint, but not when music in the higher sense is considered.

Musicians are said to be narrow-minded and men of one idea. Granted that this is so, as it may be in some cases, that does not prove that the systematic study of music taken in connection with other studies may not develop the mind and