

For the Review

## The Kinder-Symphony Club

Anything with *kl. for* attached falls pleasantly on my ear, so in spite of rain and a thunder storm I gladly availed myself of a kindly escort and attended the rehearsal of this interesting club, composed of children ranging from *four* years old. The larger number would be from eight to twelve. The *conductor* was a lad of fifteen, who conducted with an interest in his work so absorbing as to rule out self-consciousness—the bane of art. When I entered they were in full swing on a symphony of Chawtska's, which, while adapted to a child's comprehension and executive ability, was correct and finished.

Now for the instruments composing this unique orchestra: eight violins were played by boys, and four by girls; the unpropitious weather probably accounted for the absence of the cello and bassoon; the trumpet of four notes in C, quite a small one, rang out its solo notes of invitation with vim and precision, and from time to time penetrated the waves of sound with its clear, upspringing tones. A toy flute, a tube of six inches long, each end covered with thin parchment, added a soft, rich bass, not unlike that of a good *stop diapason* in a pipe organ. All these were accompanied by bells, rattles, triangles and castanets, swung, shaken, and struck in rhythmic cadence by children too small or uninstructed to use more ambitious instruments, but not too young to enjoy, *as a whole*, the music to which they intelligently brought their little share *con amore*. Two others, shall we call them instruments? In addition to the piano, were used: they were a "sleigh" and "whip," so called, the simplest contrivance possible. The "sleigh" consists of two pieces of wood, covered with stiff cartridge paper, the back of each furnished with a small wooden knob to hold it by. The effect produced by rubbing them together is like that of gay, dancing feet on a sanded floor, and was capital in the dance part of the symphony. The "whip" consists of two polished pieces of wood about 15 inches by 3, hinged securely at one end, each side having a brass handle in the middle, by which it is held. It is opened and shut more or less widely, and with varying rapidity, so as to adapt itself to the rhythmic progression of the music, which gains wonderfully by these appliances, so simple that any handy person could easily make them.

Three points struck the mind with peculiar force:

1. That while musical expression is confined to a small and privileged class, and restricted to a certain conventional routine, we shall never begin to understand its infinite richness and diversity. To know

what music really is we must study with painstaking care the sounds, common and uncommon, of the world around us, and learn to eschew that vulgar fallacy which rejects the small and unpretentious. Of all the arts, painting alone, at present, takes the commonest materials—for what are the best pigments but dirt dug out of the earth—and glorifies them by appropriate use at the hand of genius.

2. That no art can attain its grandest development that does not rest on a basis simple and broad enough to be a medium of expression for the great mass of the common people.

*Music* has art, and art, to be full-blossomed, must deal out its portion, in due season, to the weakest and smallest capacity. However high art may soar, the roots that nourish it must penetrate down into the humble earth and draw its sustenance from the most primitive elements.

3. That in the great world of musical art there is a place for the *little child*, and that without his feeble efforts, gaining strength and beauty by repeated attempts, art itself misses something which impairs its full expression and creates a sense of loss. But to avail ourselves of that free inventiveness which the child, once fairly started, will bring to music, we must condescend wisely and tenderly to their low estate, and adapt ourselves with humility to his comprehension. What treasures remain hidden in the unexplored field of childhood we have yet to learn. Sutile it to say that those who know most intimately child nature are those who respect it most profoundly.

When we looked into the kindly, earnest, German face of Mr. Trost we saw one reason for the success of this club in his patient assiduity. From Mrs. D. T. Ballard's fertile brain and loving heart sprung the idea of this "Kinder-Symphony Club." With womanly insight she *believed* in the child and its capabilities. Through her the comfortable hall in which they practised was swept and garnished for their occupation. The club gives a symphony concert next Friday, June 20th. It is to be hoped that a large and appreciative audience will reward the efforts of these small but clever performers. C.

The true value of a teacher is determined, not by what he knows, nor by his ability to impart what he knows, but by his ability to stimulate in others a desire to know.

The teacher whose mind shall not become a desert, must drink daily from the fountain of his calling. Forty eager pupils cannot quench their thirst for knowledge by looking at an empty vessel.