

A Ton of Sand and a Piano

IMAGINE, if you can, a world without music. What would the wedding party, the Christmas party, what would even the funeral party be without music?

A friend told the writer just when he was getting interested in the real business of rearing children that the finest thing he ever did for them was to give them a ton of clean sand for out-doors and a piano for indoors.

That chap gave us the best tip we have ever received that had anything to do with the home or social life. We were the proud possessors of a pigeon pair when we bought our ton of sand and the piano and "here's to the same thing over again" if we had two or twenty children to rear.

The ton of sand was dumped at the far end of the garden, divided from the flower-bed or decorative end of the quarter acre by a hedge-screen or privet. The kiddies were told that that was their "royal borough"—or burrow. They could do what they liked there, bring in as many playmates as they cared to, mess up all the garments they could wear out so long as they stuck to their end and did not poach among the flower beds.

That ton of sand was the cheapest and the healthiest "toy" our nippers ever had, and they valued it above all the spotted horses, jumping jacks, dolls and pistols they owned—and their numbers were legion. As soon as their little fingers could spread over three notes of a piano, we got them one—not an expensive full grand, or merely what is sold as a "practice piano," but a real good instrument that kept in tune a reasonable time, and which would not occasion our musical friends of the profession any uneasiness when they came to see us and sing for us.

Well our pigeon pair banged away at that piano to the full content of their souls. We got them a teacher as soon they could be taught, and it was wonderful how soon the banging gave place to the "touch" that told us that the soul of music lived in the small tabernacles of that boy and girl.

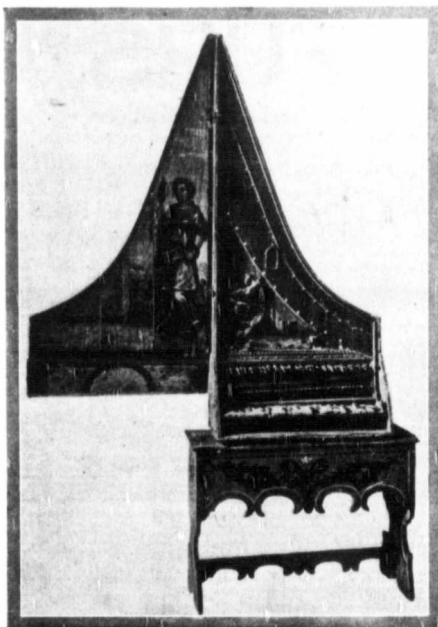
Now they are well into manhood and womanhood. The boy at the moment of writing has been "at the front" for two years and a half, has put in six months of that period right in the firing line, and we think we can speak for him when we say that his ability to "do anything in reason" with a piano has been the very life of the outfit at the base and has turned his own nerves to the point that carries a man through any "hell" and makes him proof against all calamity and temptation.

The girl can use her voice to something more than the average purpose both at home and in public. She misses the piano accompaniments of her brave brother, but she can play her own although that is a severe handicap to the soulful songster.

After the most satisfactory experience of the up-bringing of young people that any creature could hope to have; after a long and varied experience of the elements that enter into a many-sided social life, we say most emphatically that of all the fine things that heaven has provided for the delectation of man and beast, there is nothing in recreative joy to beat the function of music. A piano in the home that has children growing up in it is almost on a par with the family altar.

Still more necessary is an instrument of some kind to the home that is not blessed with the music of the little ones. There is no longer any reason why the fact that neither party to that small home circle can play should deprive it of its instrument. There are the player pianos and the wonderful gramophone developments which need no explaining.

Who does not know that the "mental mood" means everything to life. What woman of the prairie or city home needs to be told that life means to her just what is the prevailing mood of her daily life. Music is not a thing of the earth. What we know of music here is but the reflex of the trained choristers of heaven. Our belief is that heaven is here within us or it is nowhere. Anyhow it was no "fallen angel" who introduced the spirit of music into this round world.



ONE OF OUR OLDEST "PIANOS"

Could any of our musical readers tell us the story of this ancient piece of furniture. We gave some account of it some years ago.

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