

## THE MEANING AND THE MISSION OF MUSIC

A popular definition of music is that it is the language of the emotions. It is unquestionably the finest of the pleasures of sense.

Everyone to whom music makes any genuine appeal must have noticed frequently, and with wonder, its extraordinary power to tranquilize the heart, to instil a peace quite magical and beyond explanation. It soothes while it excites; and, more wonderful than its power to stimulate our emotions, is its power to reconcile and harmonize them. It does this, too, without the aid of any intellectual process; it offers us no argument; it formulates no solacing philosophy. Rather, it abolishes thought, to set up in its stead a novel activity that is felt as immediately, inexplicably grateful. It has done this through all the generations since Tubal Cain, right on down through the days when the shepherd boy's harp stilled the moody broodings and gustful passions of King Saul—on through classical days, when Apollo soothed the vigilant Argus to sleep with his lyre, and when Orpheus, with his lute, tamed the fierceness of beasts, moved rocks and trees, and lulled to sleep the very watch-dogs of hell.

What it has done through all time, music is doing to-day.

In a gross and material age, such as this, there is more need than ever for a response to the appeal of pure

beauty. The mission of music is, in this twentieth century, both more needed and more noble than at any previous time in life's history. Let us be thankful that never before was music better fitted for its work. Let us be thankful, too, that never before was its mission and its service better appreciated.

It is hardly necessary to state that music is the most universal of the arts, both in its appeal and in its response. From the cradle to the grave we move to, and are moved by, a musical accompaniment. Mother's lullaby and the simple songs of childhood stir tender memories in the minds and hearts of stern and mature men. The jovial drinking songs, and the reckless songs of good-fellowship, reflect the ideals and temperament of youth. The multifold manifestations of the love-passion are illustrated in thousands of songs. The love of the love of country, the love of the love of duty, have each dedicated to them some of music's noblest compositions.

There is not an emotion, there is not an inspiration, but that can be expressed in terms of music. Neither climate, age, race nor religion can give immunity from its power. The rice-eating Hindoo, the African aborigine, the Polynesian islander, are all as amenable to its influence as is the full-flowered product of civilization,