

Conclusion

that very reason more grand and superhuman. If we were to try to get as near as we could to our idea of "the music of the spheres," we should probably have to choose one of Bach's great organ fugues. But at present our average taste, at least in America, is not fine enough for such a severe style; we prefer sentimental anthems, and even arrangements of operatic and orchestral pieces, with plenty of "tremolo" and solos for fancy stops.

We should not, however, speak contemptuously of any musical taste which is sincere and open-minded. It is far better to have a real love for Sousa's marches and the waltzes in the latest light operas, yes, even for "rag-time," than to rave over Debussy because he is the fashion. The best qualities we can have in our relation to music are honesty and open-mindedness: honesty that keeps our taste true and wholesome, however crude; open-mindedness that is willing to learn better standards when they are pointed out. Wherever we start, we shall advance, I think, provided we have these qualities, in the direction of preferring pure music to that which is alloyed, and of loving best not what most deliciously or most richly feeds our ears, or what most violently stirs our feelings, but what gently thrills us with its divine beauty.