Although music in the complex harmonic form known to us is only a few centuries old, simple rhythmic melodies were sung, or played on various instruments, by all the ancient civilized nations, and are sung or played to-day by African and Australian savages who have never come into contact with civilization. And what is more, the remarkable influence which music has in arousing human emotions has been appreciated at all times.

Tourists relate that in some of the inland countries of Africa, scarcely any work is done by the natives except to the sound of music; and Cruikshank, speaking of the coast negroes, says it is laughable to observe the effect of their rude music on all classes, old and young, men, women, and children. "However employed, whether passing quietly through the street, carrying water from the pond, or assisting in some grave procession, no sooner do they hear the rapid beats of a distant drum, than they begin to caper and dance spontaneously. The bricklayer will throw down his trowel for a minute, the carpenter leave his bench, the corn grinder her milling stone, and the porter his load, to keep time to the inspiriting sound."

Dr. Tschudi, in his fascinating work on Peru, describes two of the musical instruments used by the Indians, and their emotional function. One is the Pututo, "a large conch on which they perform mournful music, as the accompaniment of their funeral dances." The other is called Jaina, and is a rude kind of clarionet made from a reed. "Its tone," says Tschudi, "is indescribable in its melancholy, and it produces an extraordinary impression on the natives. If a group of Indians are rioting and drinking, or engaged in furious conflicts with each other, and the sound of the Jaina is suddenly heard, the tumult ceases, as if by a stroke of magic. A dead stillness prevails, and all listen devoutly to the magic tones of the simple reed; tones which frequently draw tears from the eyes of the apathetic Indians."

If the untutored primitive man can be thus overpowered by the charm of such simple music, we can hardly wonder at the extravagant power ascribed to this art by the ancient civilized nations. The fairy tale of Orpheus, who tamed wild animals and moved rocks and trees with his singing and playing, and the story of the dolphin that was attracted by Arion's song and carried him safely across the sea, are quite as significant as if they were true stories, for they show that the Greeks were so deeply moved by music that they could readily imagine it to have a similar effect on animals, and even on inanimate objects. Almost three thousand years ago, Homer represented Achilles as "comforting his heart with the sound of the lyre," after losing his sweet Briseis; "stimulating his courage and singing the deeds of the heroes." And, as Emil Naumann fancies, there is a moral underlying the myth of the siren; "for, as Homer elsewhere suggests, noble and manly music invigorates the spirit, strengthens wavering man, and incites him to great and worthy deeds, whereas false and sensuous music excites and confuses, robs man of his self-control, till his passions overcome him as the waves overwhelmed the bewitched sailor who listened to the voice of the charmer."

At a later period in Greek history, the philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle, continued to attribute to music power so great, that we can only understand them if we bear in mind that with the Greeks the word music was a comprehensive term for all the arts presided over by the Muses, and that, even when music in our sense is alluded to by them, the reference is at the same time to the poetry which was almost always associated with music, and made its
meaning and expression more definite. Thus, we can realize how Terpander could, by the power of his song, reconcile the political factions in Sparta, and how Plato could write, in the "Republic," that "any musical innovation is full of danger to the state and ought to be prevented." He looked upon music as a tonic which does for the mind what gymnastics do for the body; and taught that only such music ought to be tolerated by the state as had a moral purpose, while enervating forms should be suppressed by the law makers.

Yet, after making due allowance for the fact that the word music was used in this comprehensive sense, enough remains to show that the power of music proper, the power of rhythmic melody, was profoundly appreciated by the Greeks. If they had not felt how greatly music intensifies and quickens the emotions, they would not have wedded all their poetry to it, nor have resorted to it on all solemn and festive occasions; nor would the Pythagoreans have found anyone willing to believe in their doctrine that music has power to control the passions. "They firmly believed," says Naumann, "that sweet harmony and flowing melody alone were capable of restoring the even balance of the disturbed mind, and of renewing its harmonious relations with the world. Playing on the lyre, therefore, formed part of the daily exercises of the disciples of the renowned philosopher, and none dared seek his nightly couch without having first refreshed his soul at the fount of music, nor return to the duties of the day without having braced his energies with jubilant strains.

Pythagoras is said to have recommended the use of special melodies as antidotal to special passions, and indeed, it is related of him that on a certain occasion he, by a solemn air, brought back to reason a youth who, maddened by love and jealousy, was about setting fire to the house of his mistress."

Similar marvellous powers were ascribed to music by the other nations. The Chinese have an old saying that "Music has the power to make Heaven descend upon earth." This art was constantly kept under rigid supervision by the government, and 354 years before Christ, one of the Emperors issued a special edict against weak, effeminate music; to which, therefore, a demoralizing influence was obviously attributed. The Japanese, we read, likewise "revere music and connect it with their idol worship," and in olden times it seems to have had even a political function, for it is said that "formerly an ambassador, in addressing a foreign court to which he was accredited, did not speak, but sang his mission." The Hindoos, again, attributed supernatural power to music. Some melodies had the power, as they believed, to bring down rain, others to move men and animals, as well as lifeless objects. The fact that they traced the origin of music to the gods shows in what esteem they held it; and their quaint story of the 16,000 nymphs and shepherdesses, each of whom invented a new key and melody in her emulous eagerness to move the heart and win the love of the handsome young god Krishna, shows that the amorous power of music was already understood in those days.

Once more, the exalted notions which the ancient Hebrews had of the dignity and importance of music, is indicated by the fact that, according to Josephus, the treasures of Solomon's Temple (which was also a great school of music) included 40,000 harps and psalteries of pure copper, and 200,000 silver trumpets. In the schools of the prophets, musical practice was an essential item. During the period of captivity the Israelites at first gave way to despondency, exclaiming, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" "But by and by they would take down their harps again from the willow bows and seek solace for the sorrows of the long exile in recalling the loved melody of their native land, and the sacred psalmody of their desolated temple" (McCintosh and Strong). There was hardly an occasion arising above the commonplace events of everyday life, when the ancient Hebrews did not resort to music. Trumpets were used at the royal proclamations and at the dedication of the Temple. There were doleful chants for funeral processions; joyous melodies for bridal processions and banquets; stirring martial strains to incite courage in battle and to celebrate victories, religious songs, and domestic music for private recreation and pleasure; and even "the grape gatherers sang as they gathered in the vintage, and the wine-presses were trodden with the shout of a song; the women sang as they toiled at the mill, and on every occasion the land of the Hebrews, during their national prosperity, was a land of music and melody." And finally, the therapeutic value of music and its power to stimulate the creative faculties were recognized. The prophets composed their songs and uttered their prophecies to the sound of musical instruments, and David drove out the evil spirit from Saul, as we read in the Bible: "And it came to pass when the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp and played with his hands. So Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

The preceding facts sufficiently illustrate the effects of music on the emotions and morals of ancient and primitive nations. Now, within the Christian era music has made enormous strides in its evolution as an art, and it seems
therefore reasonable to infer that its emotional and moral power has also increased. Yet, strange to say, a tendency has manifested itself of late, in many quarters, to flatly deny the emotional and moral potency of music. The late Richard Grant White, for instance, in a series of articles on the Influence of Music, in "The Atlantic Monthly," comes to the conclusion that "a fine appreciation of even the noblest music is not an indication of mental elevation, or of moral purity, or of delicacy of feeling, or even (except in music) of refinement of taste." "The greatest, keenest pleasure of my life," he adds, "is one that may be shared equally with me by a dunce, a vulgarian, or a villain;" and he ends by asserting, dogmatically, that a taste for music has no more to do with our minds or morals than with our complexion or stature. Dr. Hanslick, the eminent critic and professor of musical history in the University of Vienna, goes even farther. "There can be no doubt," he says, "that music had a much more direct effect on the ancient nations than it has on us." To-day, "the feelings of the layman are affected most, those of an educated artist least, by music." "The moral influence of tones increases in proportion as the culture of mind and character decreases. The smaller the resistance offered by culture, the more does this power strike home. It is well known that it is on savages that music exerts its greatest influence."

Let us briefly test these sceptical paradoxes in the light of mediaeval history and modern biography. Is it only among the ancient and primitive people, and among the musically uneducated, that the divine art exerts an emotional influence? St. Jerome evidently did not think so. He believed, at any rate, that music can exert a demoralizing influence, and he taught that Christian maidens should know nothing of the lyre and the flute. The eminent divine was guided in this matter by the same process of illogical reasoning of which, later, the Puritans were guilty when they banished music from the churches. In view of the fact that music was used to heighten the charms of wanton Roman festivities or Pagan rites, St. Jerome condemned the art itself, ignorant of the fact that music can never be immoral in itself, but only through evil associations. St. Augustine took a different view of music from St. Jerome. When he first heard the Christian chant at Milan he exclaimed: "Oh, my God! When the sweet voice of the congregation broke upon mine ear, how I wept over Thy hymns of praise. The sound poured into mine ears and Thy truth entered my heart. Then glowed within me the spirit of devotion; tears poured forth, and I rejoiced." Here we have an illustration of how music intensifies and exalts the emotions of educated men. St. Augustine's devotion "glowed within him" when he heard the music. It is for this power that the church has always employed music as a hand-maid; and those ecclesiastics who would to-day banish it arbitrarily from the church, know not what a valuable ally they are blindly repulsing in these days of religious scepticism. As Mr. Gladstone very recently remarked: "Ever since the time of St. Augustine, I might perhaps say of St. Paul, the power of music in assisting Christian devotion has been upon record, and great schools of Christian musicians have attested and confirmed the union of the art with worship."

But the greatest musical enthusiast in the ranks of mediaeval churchmen was Martin Luther. To judge by the extraordinary influence which music had on him, Luther must doubtless be classed among the lowest of savages, if Dr. Hanslick is right in saying that it is on savages that music exerts its greatest influence. He wrote a special treatise on music, in which he placed it next to theology. "Besides theology," he wrote in a letter to the musician Senfel, "music is the only art capable of affording peace and joy of the heart like that induced by the study of the science of divinity. The proof of this is that the devil, the originator of sorrowful anxieties and restless troubles, flees before the sound of music almost as much as he does before the Word of God. This is why the prophets preferred music before all the other arts ... proclaiming the Word in psalms and hymns.... My heart, which is full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary."

Luther had a good voice and a knowledge of musical composition. He played the flute and the lute, and in church he introduced congregational singing, in which the people took an active part in worship by means of the chorales. It is related that, as a child, he used to sing with other boys in the street in winter, for his daily bread, and that on one occasion, Frau Cotta frantically rushed from her house on hearing his pleading tones, took him in, and gave him a warm meal. Later in life, when he was an Augustine monk, he often chased away his melancholy and temptations by playing on his lute, and the story goes that "one day, after a self-inflicted chastisement, he was found in a fainting condition in his cell, and that his cloistered brethren recalled him to consciousness by soft music, well knowing that music was the balsam for all wounds of the troubled mind of their 'dear Martinus.'"

Coming to more recent times, we find that some of the greatest composers and other men of genius were "savages,"
When Congreve wrote that "music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," did he not mean to imply that educated people are not affected by it? Take the case, for instance, of that old barbarian, Joseph Haydn, and note how he was affected by the "Creation" when he heard it sung. "One moment," he said to Griesinger, "I was as cold as ice, and the next I seemed on fire, and more than once I feared I should have a stroke." Another "savage," Cherubini, when he heard a Haydn symphony for the first time, was so greatly excited by it that it forcibly moved him from his seat. "He trembled all over, his eyes grew dim, and this condition continued long after the symphony was ended. Then came the reaction. His eyes filled with tears, and from that instant the direction of his work was decided." (Nohl.)

Similar incidents might be quoted from the biographies of almost all the great composers. Berlioz, in his essay on Music, after referring to the story of Alexander the Great, who fell into a delirium at the accents of Timotheus, and the story of the Danish King Eric, "whom certain songs made so furious that he killed some of his best servants," dwells on the inconsistency of Rousseau, who, while ridiculing the accounts of the wonders worked by ancient music, nevertheless, "seems in other places to give them enough credence to place that ancient art, which we hardly know at all, and which he himself knew no better than the rest of us, far above the art of our own day." For himself, Berlioz believed that the power of modern music is of at least equal value with the doubtful anecdotes of ancient historians. "How often," he says, "have we not seen hearers agitated by terrible spasms, weep and laugh at once, and manifest all the symptoms of delirium and fever, while listening to the masterpieces of our great masters." He relates the case of a young Provencal musician, who blew out his brains at the door of the Opera after a second hearing of Spontini's "Vestale," having previously explained in a letter, that after this ecstatic enjoyment, he did not care to remain in this prosaic world; and the case of the famous singer Malibran, who, on hearing Beethoven's Fifth Symphony for the first time, at the Conservatoire, "was seized with such convulsions that she had to be carried out of the hall." "We have in such cases," Berlioz continues, "seen time and again, serious men obliged to leave the room to hide the violence of their emotions from the public gaze." As for those feelings which Berlioz owed personally to music, he affirms that nothing in the world can give an exact idea of them to those who have not experienced them. Not to mention the moral affections that the art developed in him, and only to cite the impressions received at the moment of the performance of works he admired, this is what he says he can affirm in all truthfulness: "While hearing certain pieces of music, my vital forces seem at first to be doubled; I feel a delicious pleasure, in which reason has no part; the habit of analysis itself then gives rise to admiration; the emotion, growing in the direct ratio of the energy and grandeur of the composer's ideas, soon produces a strange agitation in the circulation of the blood; my arteries pulsate violently; tears, which usually announce the end of the paroxysm, often indicate only a progressive stage which is to become much more intense. In this case there follow spasmodic contractions of the muscles, trembling in all the limbs, a total numbness in the feet and hands, partial paralysis of the optic and auditory nerves. I can no longer see, I can hardly hear: vertigo ... almost swooning...." Such was the effect of music on Berlioz.

As in a matter of this sort personal testimony is of more value than anything else, I may perhaps be permitted to refer to some of my own experiences. I have often been in the state of mind and body so vividly described by Berlioz, except as regards the numbness of the extremities and the partial paralysis of the sensory nerves. Hundreds of times I have enjoyed that harmless aesthetic intoxication which I believe to be more delicious to the initiated than the sweet delights of an opium eater--a musical intoxication which does not only fill the brain with floods of voluptuous delight, but sends thrills down the spinal column and to the very finger-tips, like so many electric shocks. As a boy, every experience of this sort fired my imagination with ambition, and led to all sorts of noble resolutions, some of which, at any rate, were carried into execution. The deepest impression ever made on me by any work of art was at Munich, ten years ago, when I heard for the first time Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde," which I was already familiar with through the pianoforte score. The performance began at six o'clock, and I had had nothing to eat since noon. It lasted till eleven o'clock, and one might imagine that, after all this emotional excitement, I must have been ravenously hungry. So I was; but without the slightest affection, I was horrified at the mere thought of indulging in such a coarse act as eating after enjoying such ravishing music. So I hurried back to the hotel, eager to get into my room and indulge in a long fit of weeping; and not a wink did I sleep that night, the most passionate scenes from the opera haunting me persistently, and almost as vividly as if I had been back in the theatre.
Indeed, it was the irresistible power of Wagner's music that first made me go to Europe, and that changed the whole current of my life. After graduating from Harvard I had only a few dollars in my pocket; but instead of trying to find employment and earn my daily bread, I recklessly borrowed $500 of a good-natured uncle and went to Europe, for the sole purpose of attending the first Bayreuth Festival. I had about four hundred dollars when I arrived in Bayreuth, and of these I spent two hundred and twenty-five dollars for tickets for the three series of Nibelung performances, not knowing what would become of me after the remaining one hundred and seventy-five dollars was spent. It was several weeks before the performances, and Wagner had given strict orders that no one, without exception, should be admitted to the rehearsals. But I was not to be so easily baffled, and one afternoon I sneaked into the lobby and succeeded in catching some wonderful orchestral strains by applying my ear to a keyhole. But my pleasure was short-lived. An attendant espied me and summarily ordered me off the premises, despite my humble entreaties and attempts at bribery. I now resolved to make a personal appeal to Wagner; so, a few days later, as he was entering the theatre, arm in arm with Wilhelm, I boldly walked up to him and told him I had bought tickets to all the performances, but was very anxious to attend the rehearsals, adding that I represented a New York and a Boston journal. At the mention of the word newspaper, a frown passed over his face, and he said, rather abruptly, "I don't care much about newspapers. I can get along without them." But, in a second, a smile drove away the frown and he added: "I have given orders that no one shall be admitted. However, you have come a long way--and as I have found it necessary to make some exceptions, I will admit you too." He then asked for my card and told me I would be admitted by mentioning my name to the doorkeeper. That he did not bear any deep resentment against me for unfortunately being a newspaper man, he showed the next day, by walking up to me and asking me if I had succeeded in getting in.

I mention these incidents because I think they help to disprove the notion that modern music has less power over the actions and feelings of men than primitive and ancient music. It was the wild enthusiasm inspired in me by Wagner's earlier operas that led me irresistibly to Bayreuth, and I really would have been willing to toil as a slave for years rather than miss this festival. And my experience was that of hundreds who had saved up their pennies for this occasion, or had formed pools and drawn lots if the sum was too small. I met three men in Bayreuth who had scraped together enough money for a third-class trip from Berlin, but not enough to pay for a complete Nibelung ticket for each. So they took turns and each heard his share of the Trilogy. The artists, moreover, the greatest in Germany, were prompted by their enthusiasm to give their services at this festival without any pecuniary compensation. Such actions are more eloquent of deep feeling than any words could be. How trivial are those ancient _myths_ about Arion and Orpheus compared with this modern _fact_--the building of the Bayreuth Theatre with the million marks contributed by Wagner's admirers in all parts of the world!

It is easy to see how Prof. Hanslick fell into the error of imagining that music exerts its greatest influence on savages. He probably inferred this from the fact that savages are more obviously excited by it, and gesticulate more wildly, than we do. But this does not prove his point. Savages are more _demonstrative_ in their expression of _all_ their emotions than we are; but this does not indicate that their emotions are _deeper_. On the contrary, as the poet has told us, it is the shallow brooks and the shallow passions that murmur; "the deep are dumb." It is a rule of etiquette in civilized society to repress any extravagant demonstration of feeling by gestures; and this is the reason why we are apparently less affected by music than savages. Yet, how difficult it is even to-day to repress the muscular impulses imparted by gay music, is seen in the irresistible desire to dance which seizes us when we hear a Strauss waltz played with the true Viennese swing; and in the provoking habit which some people have of beating time with their feet. Would anyone assert that a man who thus loudly beats time with his boots is more deeply affected by the music than you or I who keep quiet? Fiddlesticks! He shows just the contrary. If he had as delicate and intense an appreciation of the music as you have, he would know that the noise made by his boots utterly mars the purity of the musical sound, and jars on refined ears like the filing of a saw. If demonstrativeness is to be taken as a test of feeling, then the ignorant audiences who stamp and roar over the vulgar horse-play in a variety show have deeper feelings than the educated reader who, in his room, enjoys the exquisite works of humor of the great writers without any other expression than a smile.

Granted, then, that music has as much power to move our feelings as ever, if not more, and bearing in mind that feeling is the chief spring of action, does it not follow that music affects our _moral_ conduct, making us more refined and considerate in our dealings with other people? Not necessarily and obviously, it seems, for there are authorities who,
while conceding the emotional sway of music, deny that it has any positive moral value. The eminent critic, Prof. Ehrlich, takes this sceptical attitude, in his "History of Musical AEsthetics." If music, and art in general, has power to soften the hearts of men, how is it, he asks, that the citizens of Leipsic did not come to the rescue of the last daughter of the great Bach, but allowed her to live in abject poverty? And how is that, in Florence and Rome, some of the greatest patrons of art were princes who were extremely unscrupulous in their manner of getting rid of their enemies? Other instances might be added to those given by Prof. Ehrlich. African tourists say that the Dahomans, although passionately fond of singing and of instrumental music, are probably the most cruel of all negroes. Nero, the cruelest of emperors, is said to have regaled his ears with music after setting fire to Rome; and you have all heard the story of the two famous prima donnas whose vicious temper and jealousy drove them to a tooth and nail contest on the stage, right before the public. Everybody knows, furthermore, what a lot of scamps and vagabonds are included in the number of so-called music teachers, and what irregular lives some composers have led.

At first sight, these facts look formidable and discouraging; but they are nothing of the sort. If anyone asserted that music is _a moral panacea_, an infallible cure for all vices, these facts would, of course, be fatal to his argument; but no one would be so foolish as to make such an extravagant claim in behalf of music. Music may be, and doubtless is, a moral force, but it is not strong enough to overcome all the various demoralizing forces that counteract it; hence, it must often fail to show triumphant results. If we take the cases just cited, and examine them separately, we see that they are delusive. Is it not asking a good deal of the Leipsic citizens to support the poor relatives and descendants of all the great men that city has produced? If Bach himself had lived to claim their charity, I am convinced he would have been cared for, notwithstanding the fact that probably most of those who love his music are poor themselves, while the public at large does not even understand it, and cannot, therefore, be morally affected by it. Similarly, the reason why the Viennese allowed Schubert to starve was not because his music failed to make them generous, but because he died before they had learned even to understand it. To-day they worship his very bones, and build Schubert museums and monuments.

Again, if savages and emperors can be musical and cruel at the same time, this only proves, as I have just said, that music is not strong enough to overcome _all_ the vicious inherited and cultivated habits of civilized and uncivilized barbarians. As for the fighting prima donnas, it is obvious that a singer whose success is constantly dependent upon the whims of a fickle public, is more subject than almost any other mortal to constant attacks of envy and jealousy, so that it is unfair not to make some allowance for temper in her case. Allowances must also be made for music teachers, who, from the very nature of their profession, rarely hear music as it ought to be, and therefore naturally become impatient and irritable. They illustrate, not the normal, but the abnormal effects of music. Moreover, owing to the lamentable ignorance of so many parents and pupils, the profession of music teachers is invaded with impunity by hundreds of tramps who know so little of music that, if they tried to become cloggers or tailors with a corresponding amount of knowledge, they would be ignominiously kicked out of doors. Surely it is unfair to lay the sins of these vagabonds on the shoulders of music.

Finally, as regards the moral character and temper of composers, it should be remembered that, if some of them occasionally gave way to their angry passion, they were generally provoked to it by the obtuseness and insulting arrogance of their contemporaries. Had these contemporaries honored and commended them for enlarging the boundaries of art and the sphere of human pleasures, instead of tormenting them with cruel and ignorant criticisms, the great composers would, no doubt, have been amiable in their public relations, as they appear to have been almost invariably toward their friends. Wagner's pugnacity and frequent ill-temper, for instance, arose simply from the fact that, while he was toiling night and day to compose immortal master-works, his contemporaries not only refused to contribute enough for his daily bread, but assailed him on all sides with malicious lying, stupid criticisms, with as much obvious enjoyment of this flaying alive of a genius as if they were a band of Indians torturing a prisoner of war. Among his friends, Wagner was one of the most gentle, tender, and kind-hearted of men, and it made him frantic to see even a dumb animal suffer. He wrote a violent pamphlet against vivisection, and one day missed an important train because he stopped to scold a peasant woman who was taking to the market a basket of live fish in the agony of suffocation. I hardly know of a great composer who, in his heart of hearts, was not gentle and generous. Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Gluck, Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Weber, Liszt, and a dozen others who might be named,
though not without their faults, were kind and honest men, living arguments for the ennobling effects of music.

In no other profession can men and women be found so ready to aid a colleague in distress. Take the case of poor Robert Franz, for instance, who lost his hearing through the whistle of a locomotive, and thereby lost his professional income, and was brought to the verge of starvation because his stupid contemporaries (I mean ourselves) refused to buy his divine songs. Hardly had his misfortune become known when Liszt, Joachim, and Frau Magnus arranged a concert tour for his benefit which netted $23,000, and insured him comfort for the rest of his life.

And in general, let me ask, why is it that, whenever a charitable project is organized, musicians are invariably called upon first to give their services? Does not this amount to an eloquent and universal presumption that musical people are generous and kind-hearted?

Nor is this the only kind of presumption indicating that music commonly goes hand in hand with kindness. The English in the days of Elizabeth, as Chappell tells us, "had music at dinner, music at supper, music at weddings, music at funerals, music at night, music at dawn, music at work, music at play. He who felt not, in some degree, its soothing influence, was viewed as a morose unmusical being, whose converse ought to be shunned, and regarded with suspicion and distrust." That this was the general sentiment in England is also proved by the oft-quoted passage in "The Merchant of Venice," where Shakspere notes the magic effect of music on men and animals, and concludes with the verses--

"The man that hath no music in himself
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus;
Let no such man be trusted."

This, of course, is a poetic exaggeration, for we know that there are other sources of refinement besides music, and that some of the noblest men and women can hardly tell two tunes from one another. Nevertheless, the general presumption remains that music and jolly good-nature go together, and that music is incompatible with crime. An experience I once had in Switzerland brought home this fact to my mind in a forcible manner. I was taking a fortnight's tramp, all alone, and one day I came near the summit of a mountain pass where, some time previously, a solitary tourist had been robbed and murdered. There was no house within five miles, and I had not met a soul that morning until I approached this place, when I suddenly saw a shabbily dressed man coming down the road. Not having any weapon, I could not but feel nervous, and my heart began to beat almost audibly. Presently the man, who had apparently not yet noticed me, began to sing a Tyrolese melody. With the first notes all my fear instantly vanished, and I breathed freely again; for an instinctive feeling had told me that a man intent on murder and robbery would not sing.

Such presumptions, however, although they have some weight as arguments, do not amount to full proof. Our feelings may mislead us, and cannot be accepted in lieu of facts. We must therefore confront our problem more directly. In what manner does music affect our moral character? Does it make us less inclined to murder, stealing, lying, lust, avarice, anger, hatred, jealousy, dishonesty, cruelty, and other vices? And if so, by what means?

I find among writers on Music and Morals, a curious tendency to dodge the direct question, and indulge in side issues and digressions. Mr. Haweis, in his book on the subject, talks glibly about the training of the emotions, and has much to tell about the lives of the composers, but very little bearing directly on his subject. Wagner, in one of his essays, asserts that music has as much influence on tastes and morals as the drama itself. A frivolous and effeminate taste, he says, cannot but affect our moral conduct. The Spartans understood this when they forbade certain kinds of music as demoralizing. He believes that men who are inspired by Beethoven's music make more active and energetic citizens than those who are charmed by Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti; and he refers to the fact that in Paris, at a certain period, music became more and more frivolous as the people degenerated morally. At the same time he is obliged to admit that this, perhaps, proves rather the effect of morals on music than of music on morals; and so our problem remains in a
vague twilight.

To gain more light on the subject, let us take a few specific cases. Does the influence of music make us less inclined to perpetrate murder, suicide, or cruel practices? Everybody has heard the story of the famous Italian composer and vocalist, Stradella, whose wonderful singing in an oratorio made such a profound impression on two men who had been hired to murder him, that they not only spared him, but gave him warning that his life was in danger. This story is now regarded as a myth by some of the best authorities; but the fact that it was so long believed universally is not without significance. Take another case, which, though occurring in a fictitious drama, might easily be true. Faust, in Goethe's drama, when on the point of committing suicide, is brought back to his senses on suddenly hearing the Easter hymn. But in this case it might be said it was not the music itself, but the religious and other associations and memories awakened by it, that prevented Faust from carrying out his criminal intention. Such associations must always be taken into account when estimating the moral value of music; and yet they do not explain everything. A residue is left which must be placed to the credit of music.

Perhaps the vice best adapted to illustrate the direct influence of musical culture is cruelty. If you find a boy in the back yard torturing a cat or a dog, or bullying and maltreating his playmates, it will probably do no good to sing or play to him by way of softening his heart. On the contrary, he will probably not appreciate or understand the music at all, and the interruption will only annoy and anger him. But if you take that same boy and put him in a house where there is an _infectious musical atmosphere_, the chances are that before long his feelings will undergo a change, and he will no longer derive any pleasure from cruelty. This pleasure is one which boys share with savages, and the best way to eradicate it is by cultivating the aesthetic sensibilities. "It cannot be doubted," says Eduard von Hartmann, in his "Philosophie des Schoenen," "that aesthetic culture is one of the most important means of softening the moral sentiments and polishing coarse habits;" and Shelley, in his "Defence of Poetry," says, "It will readily be confessed that those among the luxurious citizens of Syracuse and Alexandria who were delighted with the poems of Theocritus were less cold, cruel, and sensual than the remnant of their tribe."

Now, music seems to be better adapted to bring about a regeneration of the heart than even poetry, and for two reasons: In the first place, poetry can, and often does, inculcate immoral sentiments, whereas music, pure and simple, can never be immoral. As Dr. Johnson remarks, "Music is the only sensual pleasure without vice." Secondly, it is in childhood that our moral habits are formed, and it is well known that children are susceptible to the influence of music at least five or ten years before they can really understand poetry. The infant in arms has its impatience and anger subdued countless times by the charms of a cradle song; and in this way music sweetens its temper, turns its frowns into smiles, and prevents it from becoming habitually cross and vicious. True, some young children also like to read and recite poetry, but what delights them in this case is the _musical_ jingle of rhyme and rhythm, rather than the specific qualities of the verse.

Later in life, when the children go to school, they are, as expert testimony proves, beneficially affected by singing together, which rests and refreshes the brain, and teaches them the value and beauty of co-operation. While thus singing, each child experiences the same joyous or sad feelings as its classmates, and learns in this way the great moral lesson of _sympathy_. And this brings us back to what was said a moment ago regarding the vice of cruelty. Sympathy is the correlative and antidote of cruelty. If savages were not utterly devoid of sympathy, they would not take such strange delight in witnessing the cruel tortures they inflict upon their prisoners. Indeed, it may be asserted that almost all crimes spring from a lack of sympathy, and modified forms of cruelty. If you reflect a moment, you must admit that a man who is truly sympathetic—that is, who rejoices in his neighbor's happiness and grieves over his misfortunes—can be neither ungenerous, nor deceitful, nor covetous, nor jealous, nor ferocious, nor avaricious, etc.; and one need not therefore be a pantheist to agree with Schopenhauer, that Mitleid, or sympathy, is the basis of all virtues. If, therefore, it can be shown that music is a powerful agent in developing this feeling of sympathy, its far-reaching moral value will become apparent. And this can be done easily.

Rousseau named his collection of songs "The Consolations of the Miseries of my Life;" Shakspere called music "The food of love;" and Chopin, in one of his letters to a friend, after referring to his first love affair, adds, "How often I relate to my piano everything I should like to communicate to you." Similar remarks might be quoted by the score from
the letters of composers and other great men devoted to music, showing that music is valued like a personal friend who is always ready to sympathize with our joys and sorrows. And when a real music-lover comes across a beautiful new piece, how he bubbles over with enthusiasm to play or sing it to his friends, and let them share the pleasure; his own being doubled thereby! I know of no other art that so vividly arouses this unselfish feeling, this desire for sympathetic communion. Indeed, music is the most unselfish of all the arts. A poem is generally read in solitude, and a picture can be seen by only a few at a time; but a concert or opera may be enjoyed by 5,000 or more at a time—the more the merrier. I have already stated that in public schools music helps to develop a sympathetic feeling of mutual enjoyment. And why is it that music, even since the days of the ancient Hebrews and Greeks, has been always provided at political meetings and processions, at picnics, dances, funerals, weddings—in short, at all social and public gatherings? Obviously, because it has the power of uniting the feelings of many into one homogeneous and sympathetic wave of emotion. It has a sort of _compulsive_ force which hurries along even those who are sluggish or unwilling. Plato, in his Republic, gives the curious advice that, at meetings of older people wine should be distributed, in order to make them more pliable and receptive to the counsel of sages. Many would object to such a risky policy, which, moreover, can well be dispensed with, since music has quite as much power as wine to arouse a sympathetic and enthusiastic state of mind at a public assembly, and without any danger of disastrous consequences. It is the special function of music to intensify all the emotions with which it is associated. It inflames the courage of an army of soldiers marching on to defend their country, their homes and families. It exalts the religious feelings of church-goers, and makes them more susceptible to the minister's moral counsels. Is it not absurd to say that such an art has no moral value? One of the most eloquent of modern preachers, the late Henry Ward Beecher, went so far as to admit that "In singing, you come into sympathy with the Truth as you perhaps never do under the preaching of a discourse."

The Rev. Dr. Haweis also bears testimony to the moral value of music, in the following words: "I have known the Oratorio of the Messiah draw the lowest dregs of Whitechapel into a church to hear it, and during the performance sobs have broken forth from the silent and attentive throng. Will anyone say that for these people to have their feelings for once put through such a noble and long-sustained exercise as that, could be otherwise than beneficial? If such performances of both sacred and secular music were more frequent, we should have less drunkenness, less wife-beating, less spending of summer gains, less winter pauperism. People get drunk because they have nothing else to do; they beat their wives because their minds are narrow, their tastes brutal, their emotions, in a word, ill-regulated."

These remarks suggest one of the most important moral functions of music—that of _weaning the people from low and demoralizing pleasures_. In proportion as the masses are educated to an appreciation of the subtle and exquisite pleasures afforded by the fine arts, and especially by music, will they become indifferent to, and abhor, exhibitions which involve cruelty to man and animals, such as dog-fights, boxing-matches, dangerous and cruel circus tricks, executions of criminals, etc. The pleasure derived from such brutal exhibitions is the same in kind as that which prompts savages to flay alive their prisoners of war. And the morbid pleasure which so many apparently civilized people take in reading in the newspapers, column after column, about such brutal sports, is the survival of the same unsympathetic feeling. I am convinced that no one who really appreciates the poetic beauty of a Schubert song or a Chopin nocturne can read these columns of our newspapers without feelings of utter disgust. And I am as much convinced as I am of my own existence, that a man who derives more pleasure from good music than from these vulgar columns in the newspapers, is morally more trustworthy than those who gloat over them. Music can impart only good impulses; whereas, we hear every day of boys and men who, after reading a dime novel or the police column in a newspaper, were prompted to commit the crimes and indulge in the vices they had read about. Hence, if people could be weaned from the vulgar pleasure of reading about crimes and scandals, and taught instead to love innocent music, can any one doubt that they would be morally the better for it? Just as a tendency to drunkenness can best be combated by creating a taste for harmless light wines and beer in place of coarse whiskey and gin, so a love of demoralizing and degrading amusements can best be eradicated by educating the poetic and musical sensibilities of the masses. Why are the lower classes in Germany so much less brutal, degraded, and dangerous than the same classes in England? Obviously, because, after their day's labor, they do not drink poisonous liquor in a dirty den of crime, but go to sip a few glasses of harmless beer in a garden while listening to the merry sounds of music.

Men _will_ have, and _must_ have, their pleasures. Social reformers and temperance agitators could not make a greater
mistake than by following the example of the Puritans and tabooing _all_ pleasures. They ought to distinguish between those that have a tendency to excess and vice, and those that are harmless and ennobling, encouraging the latter in every possible way. And first among those that should be encouraged is music, because it is always ennobling, and can be enjoyed simultaneously by the greatest number. Its effect is well described in Margaret Fuller's private journal: "I felt raised above all care, all pain, all fear, and every taint of vulgarity was washed out of the world." I think this is an extremely happy expression. Female writers sometimes have a knack of getting at the heart of a problem by instinct, more easily than men with their superior reasoning powers. "Every taint of vulgarity washed out of the world by music." That is precisely wherein the moral power of music lies; for vulgarity is the twin sister of vice. It is criminal to commit a murder; it is vulgar to gloat over the contagious details of it in books and newspapers. But how rampant vulgarity still is, and how rare aesthetic culture, is shown by the fact that two-thirds of the so-called news in many of our daily papers consist of detailed reports of crimes in all parts of the world, which are eagerly read by hundreds of thousands, while our concert halls have to be filled with dead-heads.

There is one more way in which music affects our moral life, to which I wish to call attention, namely, through its value as a tonic. No operatic manager has ever thought of advertising his performances as a tonic, yet he might do so with more propriety than the patent medicine venders whose grandiloquent advertisements take up so much space in our newspapers. Plato, in the "Laws," says that "The Gods, pitying the toils which our race is born to undergo, have appointed holy festivals in which men rest from their labors." Lucentio, in "The Taming of the Shrew," advances the same opinion in more definite and pungent terms:

"Preposterous ass! that never read so far
To know the cause why music was ordain'd!
Was it not to refresh the mind of man
After his studies, or his usual pain?"

There can be no doubt whatever that music has the most remarkable effect, not only on our minds, but on our bodies. Physiologists tell us that different kinds of mental activity are carried on in different parts of the brain, and that, in order to recover from fatigue, we need not rest altogether, but merely take up some other kind of work. Hundreds of times I have found that, however much I may be fatigued by a day's brain work, I can play all the evening, or attend a concert or opera, without in the least adding to my fatigue. On the contrary, in most cases it disappears altogether, the music acting on the mind as a surf bath does on the body. Like many others, I have found that the best way to cure a headache is to attend an orchestral concert. It works like a charm. It stirs up the circulation in the brain as a brisk walk does in the body. Even brain disease is eased in this way. The power of music even to cure insanity altogether, was frequently maintained in ancient and mediaeval times. This claim is doubtless exaggerated, yet there is more than a grain of truth in it. There can be no doubt that violent maniacs can be calmed, and melancholy ones cheered and soothed, by music. To get an authoritative opinion on this subject, I wrote to Dr. Hammond. He answered: "I know of no cases of insanity that have been cured by music, but I have seen many cases in which music has quieted insane persons, exerting the same calming influence that it does on most of us when we are irritated by petty annoyances."

"When we are irritated by petty annoyances." It is then that music becomes a medicine and a moral tonic. Writers on ethics have, hitherto, too much overlooked the moral importance of health. Where there is a lack of health, we rarely find any moral sweetness of temper. The vices may be small and peevish, but in their aggregate they are enough to poison the happiness of the household. If a man comes to ruin from drink and the crimes it leads him to commit, we call him immoral. But is he not also immoral if, from excess of work and worry, and wilful neglect of exercise, rest, and recreation, he breaks down and beggars his family, becoming a burden to them instead of a help? I think he is, and that, instead of pitying such a man, we should censure him. Ignorance of the laws of hygiene, physical and mental, is no valid excuse. He can buy a book on the subject for one dollar. But he does not even need to do that. Music, we read in Shakespere, has the power of "killing care and grief of heart," and what he needs, therefore, is to hear some good music every evening, at home or at the opera. This will draw the blood from the over-worked part of his brain to another part, and by thus relieving it of the tormenting persistency of worrying thoughts and business cares, enable him to enjoy
refreshing, dreamless sleep afterward. In this way music may help to restore his health, cure his dyspepsia, and sweeten his moral temper.

In America, more than anywhere else, is music needed as a tonic, to cure the infectious and ridiculous business fever which is responsible for so many cases of premature collapse. Nowhere else is so much time wasted in making money, which is then spent in a way that contributes to no one's happiness—least of all the owner's. We Americans are in the habit of calling ourselves the most practical nation in the world, but the fact is it would be difficult to find a nation less practical. For, what is the object of life? Is it to toil like a galley slave and never have any amusements? Every nation in Europe, except the English, knows better how to enjoy the pleasures of life than we do. Our so-called "practical" men look upon recreation as something useless, whereas in reality it is the most useful thing in the world. Recreation is recreation—regaining the energies lost by hard work. Those who properly alternate recreation with work, economize their brain power, and are therefore infinitely more practical than those who scorn or neglect recreation.

The utility and the moral value of refined pleasures is not sufficiently understood. It should be proclaimed from the housetops every day. Bread and butter to eat, and a bed to sleep in, are not the only useful things in the world, but, in the words of Shelley, "Whatever strengthens and purifies the affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful." Music is useful because it does this, and it is useful in many other ways. Singing strengthens the lungs, playing the muscles, and both stimulate the mind. Milton, Schiller, George Sand, Alfieri, and other geniuses have testified that music aroused their creative faculties; and in Beaconsfield's "Contarini" occurs this passage: "I have a passion for instrumental music. A grand orchestra fills my mind with ideas. I forget everything in the stream of invention." Furthermore, music is a stepping-stone to social success. A gifted amateur is welcomed at once into circles to which others may vainly seek admission for years; and a young lady with a musical voice has a great advantage in the period of courtship. But most important of all is the moral value of music as an ennui killer. Ennui leads to more petty crimes than anything else; and a devotee of music need never suffer a moment's ennui. There are enough charming songs and pieces to fill up every spare moment in our lives with ecstatic bliss, and to banish all temptation to vice. It is in reference to similar pleasures that Sir John Lubbock, in his essay on the "Duty of Happiness," exclaims: "It is wonderful, indeed, how much innocent happiness we thoughtlessly throw away." The art of enjoying life is an accomplishment which few have thoroughly mastered.

(The end)

Henry Theophilus Finck's essay: Music And Morals

By Henry Theophilus Finck